



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

O F S A N I B E L

The Voter

League of Women Voters of Sanibel

Volume 4 Issue 5 March 2013

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

Greetings from President Carolyn Gray

The "season" on Sanibel is in full swing with more to do than most of us can manage, along with partial gridlock on the roads. It is not as serious as the gridlock in Washington, but it does create much competition for our League activities. I do hope that you will find time to join us for our Lake "O"/Clewiston trip on March 22-23.

LWV Board members met with some members on February 13 and had a productive conversation about interests and program activities for the future. There was some talk about forming a book club to read some of the many books about politics, both current and historical. At the Annual Meeting April 9, perhaps we can hear from those who may have an interest in joining such a club or providing leadership to get it started.

As most of you already know, there will not be a contested municipal election this year, so we will miss our opportunity to host a debate among candidates for Sanibel City Council. We are, however, interested in seeing how we might engage our Council members in a discussion of the major issues facing the city in the coming year.

This is the year for an LWV State Convention-Council on April 12 and 13 in Tallahassee. Sanibel is allotted four delegates to the State Convention. I plan to attend and welcome others to join me as delegates. Please note the article below with a link to the registration site.

Respectfully yours,

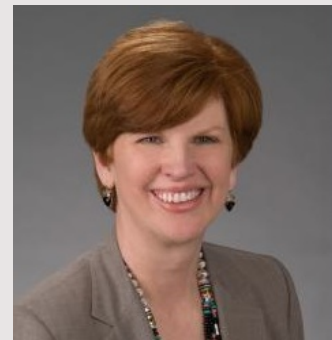
Carolyn Gray





The Voting Rights Act Remains Critical Safeguard of the Right to Vote

Washington, D.C. (February 27, 2013) - Today, Elisabeth MacNamara, President of the League of Women Voters of the U.S., joined civil rights leaders, members of Congress and activists on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court to speak out in support of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA).



This morning the court heard arguments in *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder*, a case that examines the constitutionality of Section 5 of the VRA, landmark legislation that outlaws racial discrimination in state voting practices, and its critical enforcement mechanism.

"While we've made immense progress to expand the right to vote, so much remains to be done, especially as the American electorate continues to diversify," said MacNamara. "The recent onslaught of anti-voter state legislation further fuels the urgency and need for Section 5 as **the** tool to keep our elections free, fair and accessible."

"Today, the threat to these key principles is real and growing. Anti-voter legislation has swept the country, putting the very foundation of our democracy at risk by erecting new barriers to the polls, restricting voter registration efforts, shortening voting periods and illegally purging voter lists," MacNamara added.

"Section 5 has helped transform American democracy from a restricted, segregated past to one of remarkable inclusion," said MacNamara. "The enormity of this threat cannot be overstated. The importance of the outcome of this case cannot be overstated. We are here today to sound the alarm and so that the voices of our fellow citizens are not silenced."

In their work protecting voters, Leagues around the country have used

Section 5 as a critical safeguard to protect the rights of all voters. The League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters of South Carolina have submitted amicus briefs in this case and were present at the hearings in Washington, DC.

"For those who argue Section 5 is no longer necessary need look no further than my home state of South Carolina," said Barbara Zia, President of the South Carolina LWV. "Using Section 5, the League and our partners were able to battle back and overturn a discriminatory voter ID law. The VRA protected the voting rights of hundreds of thousands of South Carolinians and in doing so protected the very foundation of our great democracy - our right to vote and have our votes counted."

"Surely, the problems exposed by the 2012 elections--long lines, shortened early voting hours, and more-- should be an impetus for the Court to more fully enforce the laws that protect our voting rights, not take them away," concluded MacNamara. "The thought that the Supreme Court might overrule Congress, and take away voting rights should send a chill down the spine of every American."

Contact Kelly Ceballos at kceballos@lwv.org to find out more or to schedule an interview.

Editor's Note: To read LWV President Elisabeth McNamera's observations while attending the Supreme Court's hearing on the Voting Rights Act, [Click Here.](#)

LWVF Responds to Senate's Passage of Ethics Reform Bill

Tallahassee, Florida -- In response to the Senate's passage of SB 2 today, Deirdre Macnab, president of the League of Women Voters of Florida, released the following statement:

"The League of Women Voters of Florida congratulates Senate President Don Gaetz and the members of the Florida Senate for their Opening-Day passage of SB 2, the Senate's ethics reform bill. What a telling message for the Senate to send to the people of Florida!

We are especially supportive of the provisions in this bill that offer increased ability to collect fines for ethics violations; new ways to refer complaints to the Ethics Commission; and the requirement for online placement of financial disclosure forms for public officials.

While additional issues remain to be addressed, SB 2 is a good start, and the League is cautiously optimistic that the full Legislature will pass effective ethics reform legislation this year. We now look to Speaker Will Weatherford and the Florida House to keep this important issue moving



weatherford and the Florida House to keep this important issue moving forward."

Lee County LWV hosts local elected officials.

Three of us (Carolyn Gray, Maddy Mayor, and Linda Kramer) attended the Lee County LWV's invitational Meet & Greet session with newly elected officials on February 2. It was a well attended session with an opportunity to talk with both Lee LWV board members and to hear the three minute presentations from a number of county officials. The two League Boards have agreed to meet and see how we can coordinate our work together in the future.



Mark Your Calendars!!

March 22, 10:30 a.m.

Water Quality and Policy
See details in article below.

April 9, 7 p.m.

Annual Meeting, Sanibel Library

Lake Okeechobee Trip March 22 - 23, 2013

Jointly sponsored by LWVS and SCCF.

By Bob Winters

Our government affects us in many ways. One set of government actions of particular significance for Sanibel and Captiva is the periodic release of nutrient rich water from Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee estuary. Those releases have a substantial impact on the quality of the water washing our beaches. The LWV-Sanibel has teamed up with the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, SCCF, to offer a special excursion to go to the source and learn about the drivers of these decisions. In addition to learning more about the important events upstream from us.



we will learn about life in a different part of Florida.

On March 22, the group will first assemble on the South side of Franklin Locks, just off State Road 80. SCCF's Natural Resources Policy Director Rae Ann Wessel will meet the group to share some of her river lore and explain the challenges that face us today, living downstream from such a massive, disrupted watershed.



After a picnic lunch, travelers will move on upstream and meet South Florida Water Management District Board member Dan DiLisi at the Clewiston Field Office. Dan and the staff will explain the role of SFWMD in controlling water flow in their district, which stretches from Orlando to the Florida Keys.

The final stop for our first day is the Clewiston Museum to meet director Butch Wilson, long-time resident of the Lake Okeechobee area, lake fisherman and sugar worker, and storyteller extraordinaire. Museum exhibits tell the history of Clewiston from its days as a tiny settlement created for northerners escaping cold winters to enjoy the healthful benefits of South Florida's climate up to its modern day agricultural activities. Butch will share his own perspective of how water shaped the history of his community. He is willing to stay after the museum's regular closing time to answer questions people may have about life on Lake Okeechobee.

People choosing to spend the night in Clewiston will join other early risers for an 8:30 a.m. trip to Storm Water Treatment Area #5, a now world famous place for bird watching. Local resident Margaret England will serve as our guide. STA 5 is not regularly open for public use. Spotting scopes and binoculars are good tools to have for this part of the journey.

The trip cost is \$40 for LWV-Sanibel and/or SCCF members and \$45 for non-members. The cost is the same whether people chose to not go on the Saturday bird walk or only choose that. Lodging and meals are not included. Pack a lunch for the stopover at Franklin Locks.

For registration information please contact Carolyn Gray at 395-9694 or carolynmgray45@gmail.com. Deadline for registration is Wednesday, March 20, 2013. Please make your checks out to LWV Sanibel and mail them to:

Carolyn Gray
2010 Wild Lime Drive
Sanibel, FL 33957.

Carpooling is encouraged: To assist with carpooling, a few days before the trip, we will send all who register a list of others who have registered along with contact information so that you can arrange carpooling for the event.

Schedule Details

March 22

10:30 a.m. Assemble at Franklin Locks by personal car, bring lunch if continuing to later modules. Presentation by Rae Ann Wessel. On Mapquest, it is about 38 miles (or about an hour's drive) from the Sanibel Community House to the Franklin Locks at 1660 S. Franklin Rd, in Alva, FL.

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

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

1:00 p.m. Presentation by Dan DiLisi, South Florida Water Management District Commissioner.

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

5 - 6:00 p.m. On the dike with Butch Wilson.

Dinner and overnight options are the Clewiston Inn (863-983-8151), Holiday Inn (Front Desk 863-983-5100, Reservations 877-410-6667), and Best Western (863-983-3400).

March 23

8:30 a.m. Guided bird walk at Storm Water Treatment Area 5.

LWV-Florida Will Resume Trips to Cuba

Dear friends,

In mid-February, the LWVF was notified by the U.S. Department of the Treasury - Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), that a travel license has been granted to the League of Women Voters of Florida Education Fund until February 2015. This means that we will be able to resume our people-to people project, "Sisters Across the Straits."

Dates and itineraries as well as specific programs in Cuba are being prepared to accommodate the demand from many League members, not just in Florida, but from across the country. We plan departures from Tampa as well as from Miami and the size of our delegations will be no more than 20 participants.

Please **CLICK HERE** for additional information as to dates and costs. We are scheduling departures from Tampa in April and May 2013. We are looking



scheduling departures from Tampa in April and May 2013. We are looking forward to continuing with this successful project and appreciate your support.

For information from an experienced LWVF "Sisters Across the Straits" traveller, contact our local LWV-Sanibel Board member, Maddy Mayor (239/472- 3274, mmmaddymayor76@gmail.com)

Sincerely,

Annie Betancourt, Coordinator
Sisters Across the Straits
League of Women Voters of Florida
anniebetancourt9@gmail.com

League of Women Voters of Florida 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](#)

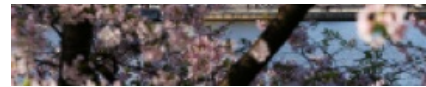
The League Visits Our Nation's Capital



Join fellow LWV-Florida members on an exciting springtime trip to Washington, D.C. from **March 20-24, 2013** during the world-famous cherry blossom festival. See the White House, Supreme Court and Capitol buildings through the League's perspective via guided tours of each. The trip is full of Washington, D.C.'s greatest sites - all designed to give you a rich and full experience of our nation's capital. This is a trip you will not want to miss!

[CLICK HERE](#) to get more information or to register today!





Membership Application

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?
E-mail sanibellwv@gmail.com

Name _____ Phone (Home) _____

Address _____ Phone (mobile) _____

_____ E-mail _____

Please Circle Annual Membership Level

\$100 Susan B. Anthony membership _____

\$90 Household membership _____

\$60 Individual membership _____

\$30 Student membership _____

\$5.00 for LWV-Florida Lobby Fund _____

Gift for LWV-US Education Fund _____

TOTAL _____

Please Circle Your Interest Topics

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

LWV-Sanibel Board

Carolyn Gray, President
Robert Winters, 1st Vice President, Program
Linda Kramer, 2nd Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer

Maddy Mayor, Membership
Linda Robison, Legal advisor
Dick Calkins, Voter Service
Carla Benninga, Founding President
Maree Elowson, The Voter Newsletter Editor
Off Board
Jana Stone, Publicity

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.

March 13 -- regular meeting
April 10 -- regular meeting

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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