



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

The Voter

League of Women Voters of Sanibel

Volume 4 Issue 7 May 2013

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



Greetings from President Linda Kramer

Thank you for electing me as your President for the coming year. It is a pleasure and honor to serve in this position for a second, non- consecutive term. I look forward to a year of growth and greater member participation. The entire 2013-2014 Board is committed to this goal.

Thanks to Carolyn Gray's leadership during the 2012-2013 year, we made significant progress in growing the League of Women Voters on Sanibel (see our recognition certificates below). We are pleased that she has been elected to the Florida State Board of the League of Women Voters. Carolyn will be able to guide our participation in state-wide issues, help us obtain outstanding programs, and advise us in other activities. Her election is both a recognition of her many talents and of the impact that LWV-Sanibel is making within Florida.

We are fortunate to have an outstanding group of energetic and enthusiastic people on our Board of Directors and as Committee Chairs. Plans for the coming year have already begun in a significant way. Our Voter Services Committee, with Dick Calkins as Chair, is planning another winter voter registration drive and exploring ways of involving Sanibel high school students in this effort. Ellen O'Neill, our new Program Chair, has already begun outreach to potential speakers. The Board is also quite interested in beginning a LWV-Sanibel study group in the fall. If you would like to participate, please let me know (email me at SanibelLWV@gmail.com).

Your League is looking at ways to coordinate our activities with other local organizations that share our interests on specific projects. Maddy Mayor, Chair of the Membership Committee, is in the process of planning prospective membership gatherings in Sanibel neighborhoods. The purpose of these meetings will be to inform

the community about the important public service activities of the League and to attract new members.

If you have not done so already, please be sure to send in your LWV-Sanibel dues (form to copy and mail follows below). I hope each of you has a wonderful summer, whether in Sanibel or in other locales and I look forward to seeing you again in the fall.

LWV-Sanibel 2013-2014 Program

Ellen O'Neill, Program Chair

Healthcare in Florida: Cost and Delivery Issues
November 20, 2013, 12:00 Noon, Sweet Melissa's Restaurant

Election Reform/Voter Issues January 2014

Stand Your Ground repeal/handgun control February 2014

Immigration Reform March 2014

LWV-Sanibel Concludes 2012-13 Season with Annual Meeting and Presentation by Mayor Ruane

Our LWV-Sanibel concluded its season and Annual Meeting on April 9th by electing new officers and three new Board members (Jim Lavelle, Ellen O'Neill, and Martha Wolf; see mini biographies below), approving the budget and discussing programs being planned for next season.



Mayor Kevin Ruane gave an excellent update on the status of our city and its future development. Many of our nonprofit cultural organizations are seeking expanded facilities to accommodate demand and the city would like to see them working together on shared space. Also, there has been public interest in improving the appearance of out-dated commercial buildings. The Mayor welcomes comments and feedback.



Thanks to Marcy Calkins for the photos.

Meet Our New LWVS Board Members

Jim Lavelle -

Jim grew up in Evanston, Illinois and went on to the University of Illinois to earn his undergraduate degree and the

University of Chicago for an MBA. Jim started his career on the East Coast before returning to the Midwest where he worked in banking in Milwaukee. Upon retirement, Mary and Jim moved to Sanibel and are involved in a number of activities, including the Captiva Yacht Club and Big Arts. Jim, an avid boater, is a member of the Power Squadron, is a past president of COTI, and is a Rotarian. Mary and Jim have two children and two grandchildren. For the summer months, they fly in their own plane back to their home in Saukville, WI.



Ellen O'Neill-

Ellen is a retired college administrator, having served as Dean of College Development for CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College. All her work experience has been in the public sector serving on and for volunteer boards such as the Catholic Diocese of Rochester, the United Way, three college foundations, and an industrial development agency.

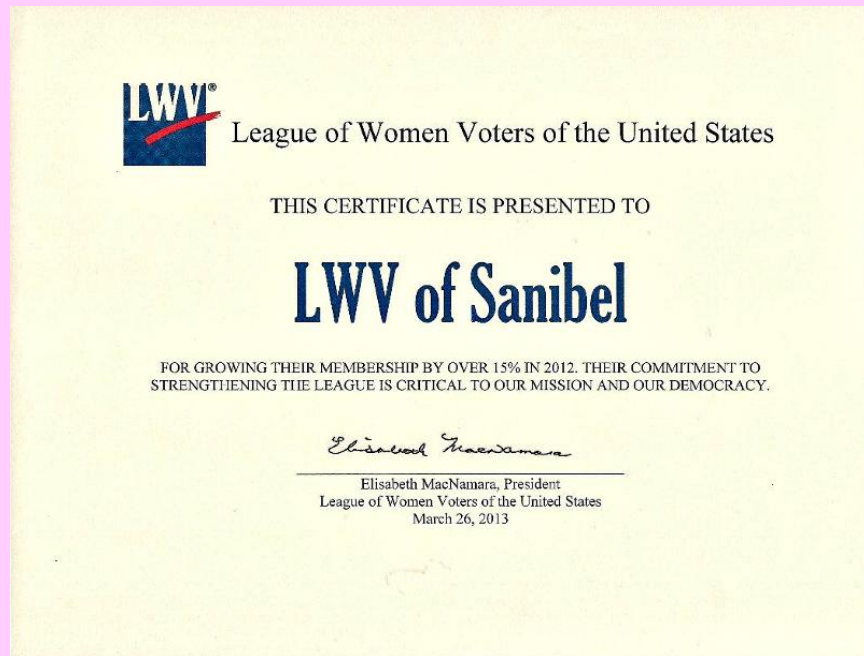
A year ago, Ellen moved to Sanibel from the East Coast of Florida. While on Sanibel, Ellen volunteers with FISH and with the Historical Museum and Village where she is a docent and a board member. In the summer months, she returns to the Finger Lakes area of New York State. Ellen is delighted to be involved with LWV-Sanibel because, as she notes, "I believe voter issues are very important in Florida."

Martha Wolf -

Martha was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She earned her undergraduate degree from Newcomb College (Tulane University) and her law degree in 1974 from Duquesne University School of Law. From 1974-2000, Martha was a practicing lawyer in areas of commercial collection, labor and family law. Martha and her husband, John, have been Sanibel residents since 2002 and are actively engaged as volunteers at Ding Darling NWR, SCCF, and the San-Cap Art League. They spend the summer in Madison, CT, on the shore of Long Island Sound.

LWV-Sanibel
Earns National
and State LWV
Recognition for
growing our
membership!

Congratulations to
all, especially Maddy
Mayor.



The Florida Legislature Adjourned

The Legislature has concluded its 2013 regular session, which runs 60 days. The League of Women Voters of Florida monitored the sessions and LWVF Governmental Consultant, Ben Wilcox, filed his last Capitol Report on May 3rd. [Click here](#) for access to Ben's excellent summary of the legislative actions, good and questionable, for this session. As Carolyn Gray reports in her article below, some of issues of ethics and election reform that the League supported were enacted into law.



Report from the LWV-Florida Legislative Summit & Convention

By Carolyn Gray, LWVF 2nd Vice President and LWV-Sanibel Board Member



This has been a good legislative year for the League of Women Voters of Florida. After the election problems of the past few years, we finally have an election reform bill that improves upon the process. If you read the recent LWVFlorida Voter, you know that we also have achieved progress on ethics reform, on the right to speak in public meetings, and in Governor Scott's veto of an alimony bill that would have been particularly onerous.

In early April, I traveled to Tallahassee to meet with the LWV State Board of Directors, attend the Legislative Seminar, lobby our legislators and attend the LWVF State Convention. If you have never experienced such an event in Florida, I would encourage you to consider attending in the future. The State Convention convenes every two years. I arrived in Tallahassee on April 10th and met with the State Board of Directors to learn about procedures and meet current and incoming Board members. The Board appointed two new members: Pat Schroder, a Colorado Democratic congresswoman from 1973-1997, who now resides in Florida, and Alex Villalobos, a Republican member of the Florida Senate from 2001-2010. All of us new members were voted into office at the 2nd Plenary Session during the Convention.

Legislative Seminar

We began this morning session in the Capitol Building with brief speeches by lobbyists, legislators, and agency heads. Each speaker was given fifteen minutes to speak and ten minutes to take questions. We heard from a representative of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, which supports background checks for all gun purchases, including Internet



purchases, mental health checks on all gun buyers and the 1994 ban on assault weapons. This presentation was followed by one given by a representative of the NRA who echoed the NRA talking points.

We heard from a representative of the Department of Corrections advocating for more privatization of the prisons. He was followed by a Republican congressman who was concerned about the lack of accountability of the vendors in the current prisons operating under a private contract. A major problem with privatization is the Contract and Negotiating Act (CCA).

We also heard from a Democratic senator who is concerned about human trafficking in Florida. Overall, A wide variety of issues were presented with lots of opportunities for questions.

Ben Wilcox, LWVF Governmental Consultant, provided packets and guidelines for lobbying legislators. Unfortunately, both the House and Senate were in session when we had free time for lobbying. Of course, meeting with the legislative staff is also instructive in understanding the positions and issues of interest to our legislators. Unfortunately, there is a disconnect on many issues the League supports and the agenda of many legislators; we saw that starkly in terms of Health Care.

Ethics. The League recommended that the Ethics Committee have Subpoena power, be able to levy fines, provide 24-hour disclosure of personal income and investments, eliminate independent committees such as Committees of Continuing Existence (CCEs) and assure that all contributions to candidates be in the sunshine. Most of what the League supported was included in the final bill that passed, including the right to speak in public meetings.

Healthcare. The LWVF recommended that Florida take the money the Federal Government is providing for Medicaid coverage to aid the 1 million uncovered Floridians who are impoverished. We saw that effort go down to defeat.

Election Reform. Many of the negative issues from the 2011 infamous 1355 bill were removed. Only expedited voting process for the elderly and disabled and mandated early voting on the Sunday before Election Day were not included in the final bill. The requirement of a written request for absentee ballots to be sent to an address other than the voter's home address (a new wrinkle) was added.

Special Caucus on Climate Change. I attended an informal caucus on Climate Change that included a power point presentation based on the book by James Hoggan, "Climate Cover Up: The Crusade to Deny Global Warming." It was an interesting discussion and heartening to know there are serious people in Florida concerned about climate change. This event complemented the May 4th Lee County LWV meeting on climate change that I attended with Maddy Mayor and Ellen O'Neil

LWV of Florida 2013 Biennial Convention **April 12-13, Tallahassee, FL**

Prior to the first Plenary session, I attended a workshop on Social Media. If you would like to see some of the Social Media options being used by Leagues around the country, go to the National League's Facebook page. I came away thinking that the Sanibel

League should at least have a Facebook page in addition to The Voter e-newsletter and a redesigned website. I will bring this to our LWVS Board of Directors at our October 2013 meeting.

Plenary Session I. 118 members present

The first plenary session was primarily to establish what issues we would vote on in Plenary Session II.

Facts from 2012 in Florida: League members distributed 1.1 million voter guides and registered 4,000 new Florida voters. There were 42,000 provisional ballots, a 20% increase, and 17% of voters were Hispanic. In the future we need more press on how to fill out absentee ballots. There were 5 million (!) hits to LWVF website. LWVF established four new local leagues and engaged in four lawsuits -- winning two and two still in litigation. The state LWV membership increased by 40%. The League has been certified for two more years to visit Cuba. The state League office now has three full time positions in Tallahassee. There will be no increase in the PMP (per member payment) to the state League. The awards ceremony included a presentation to our own LWV-Sanibel for the 2nd highest percentage increase in membership for a medium sized League.

Following the business of the day, many of us attended a welcome picnic at the LWVF headquarters (actually a house with a large backyard). It was a welcoming informal event that offered an opportunity to interact with folks from around the state. The Supervisor of Elections in Leon County (where Tallahassee is located) gave an interesting talk about "What's Wrong with Elections in Florida."

Plenary Session II. 112 members present

In a 48 to 34 vote following intense debate, we agreed to collect signatures to support the Constitutional Amendment Petition to Fund Land Acquisition. This means we may now solicit voter signatures on behalf of LWVF, but must follow strict guidelines established by the Florida's Water and Land Legacy (for more information, [click here](#)). The major debate issue for the delegates was not the sentiment of the amendment, rather that we have a 70-year history of not supporting dollar issues in the Florida State Constitution. The major deciding point was that this proposed amendment sunsets in 20 years.

All Public Policy Positions were reaffirmed. The amended budget was approved with funds set aside for leadership training, health insurance for full time workers and no increase in dues. The President and the Board of Directors presented their priorities and members in attendance had an opportunity to provide "direction to the Board" for items not stated in the Board priorities.

Directions for the LWVF Board included:

- * Fund the University of Florida Library to complete the League archiving project
- * Provide healthcare benefits for paid staff
- * Provide funds for leadership training
- * Establish a webinar for training treasurers
- * Encourage more collaboration among local leagues
- * Investigate the purchase of liability insurance for League Boards

Thank you for support and encouragement. I look forward to working with you again

Thank you for support and encouragement. I look forward to meeting with you again in the fall. Have a great summer.

LWV-Florida Excursion to Seneca Falls, NY

Seneca Falls is the birthplace of the American suffragist movement. Travel with the League this summer, June 26 - 30, to celebrate the legacy of the suffragists and learn more about the lives and work of the brave women and men who helped shape America's history.



A Key figure in the early Women's Rights movement was Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815 - 1902). She is believed to have been one of the main driving forces behind the 1848 Seneca Falls First Women's Rights Convention.

Space is limited, so sign up soon! [Click here](#) for to register and for more information about what promises to be a fascinating trip.



Suggested Summer Reading

LWVS President Linda Kramer and League Member Amanda Cross recommend "The Voting Wars: From Florida 2000 to the Next Election" by Richard L. Hasen, Yale University Press, 2012.

This book is available at the Sanibel Public Library. The dust jacket says it all...

"Richard L. Hasen, a respected authority on election law, chronicles and analyzes the battles over election rules from 2000 to the present. From a nonpartisan standpoint he explores the rising number of election-related lawsuits and charges of voter fraud as well as the decline of public confidence in fair results. He explains why future election results will be worse than previous ones--more acrimonious, more distorted by unsubstantiated allegations, and amplified by social media. No reader will fail to conclude with Hasen that election reform is an urgent priority, one that demands the attention of conscientious citizens and their elected representatives."

Would you like to recommend a book?
Email Linda Kramer at SanibelLWV@gmail.com.

[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



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

Questions?
E-mail sanibellwv@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

LWV-Sanibel 2013-14 Board

Linda Kramer, President
Linda Robison, Vice President
Jim Lavelle, Treasurer
Robert Winters, Secretary
Maddy Mayor, Membership
Dick Calkins, Voter Service
Carla Benninga, Founding President
Maree Elowson, The Voter Newsletter Editor
Ellen O'Neill, Programs
Martha Wolf

Off Board

LWV-Sanibel 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. With some exceptions, meetings are on the second Wednesdays of the month. Upcoming Board meetings will be on October 23, November 13, and December 11.

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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