



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

The Voter

lwvsanibel.org

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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 and friends!

On behalf of the LWV of Sanibel board of directors, I want to thank all of our renewing members and brand new members for your support. We have had an amazing surge of new members since the November, 2016 election and following the Women's March in D.C. and Naples. You have told us the League is a safe, non-partisan space for education and dialogue on the issues of the day.

Many of you have also been reminded of an earlier involvement in your hometown Leagues and have joined once again here on Sanibel. We hope to make you proud of the work we do!



*February 1 Sanibel City
Council Debate*

The Sanibel City Council election is March 7. Please vote if you haven't already voted by mail. The LWV of Sanibel-hosted debate took place on February 1 at the beautiful new Community House. It was well attended with all four candidates graciously answering questions posed to them by both the moderator and members of the audience. We appreciate all the help we received from the Community House, the City of Sanibel and our many volunteers.

Our February 15 Luncheon Program had the highest

attendance ever. Our speakers were interesting, informative and willing to take all questions. See below for an overview by our own intrepid LWV of Sanibel "reporter" Mary LaVelle.



*At the February 1 Debate (l-r):
Kevin Ruane, Mick Denham,
Marty Harrity, Robyn Cook,
moderator Dr. Roger Green, and
Jason Maughan*



*Barbara Joy Cooley with
February 15 speakers Mitchell
Hutchcraft and Rae Ann Wessel*

Read on for information about our upcoming luncheon on Thursday, March 16. Sanibel resident and resident expert Dr. Stuart Langton will speak about his vast experiences with a most timely topic, the future of civics in Florida and around the nation.

March 27 is the date of the long-awaited "Go Solar, Sanibel!" event co-hosted with the Green Team at Sanibel Congregational Church. Information follows.

Finally, we understand how busy the month of March is for all of you and appreciate your participation in the LWV of Sanibel activities. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Robyn Cook

Hot Topic: "Citizen Participation & the Future of Civic Life in Florida"

LWV of Sanibel Program and Luncheon Thursday, March 16

**Featured Speaker:
Dr. Stuart Langton, Chairman of the Coordinating
Council of The Florida Civic Advance**

Citizen Participation and Civic Life in Florida will be the focus of the Thursday, March 16, League of Women Voters of Sanibel monthly luncheon and program at the Sundial Beach Resort. We'll hear from featured speaker Dr. Stuart Langton, who is one of the foremost experts on civic engagement and leadership development.

Dr. Langton is the Chairman of the Coordinating Council of The Florida Civic Advance, a network of more than 40 Florida civic and other organizations committed to



addressing one of Florida's greatest challenges. Langton notes that Florida has a comparatively low level of civic engagement by its citizens. This weak civic life, he says, is a barrier to achieving community stability, citizen engagement, economic prosperity, and a desirable quality of life.

Dr. Langton was a Professor at Boston University, the Lincoln Filene Professor of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Tufts University, and Senior Fellow at the Florida Center for Environmental Studies and is Senior Fellow at the Florida Consensus Center, Florida State University. He has edited 5 books and written over 50 articles about citizen participation and civic renewal. He chaired the All American Cities Program and the National Conference on Citizen Participation and is a co-founder of the International Association for Public Participation. He also founded a consulting and research company through which he has assisted more than 400 organizations.

Dr. Langton has served on the board of Audubon Florida and continues to serve on the Policy Committee. He is also a member of the board of directors of the Committee of the Islands (COTI) on Sanibel. As a pioneer on civic issues and action, he has applied his experience and expertise to advancing the civic health of Florida and its communities.

When: Thursday, March 16, 11:30 a.m. registration; noon-2:00 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, March 13.

Cost: \$25 per person (includes lunch). 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, we will bill for unpaid or absent reservations. 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 speaker.

"Go Solar, Sanibel!"

Monday, March 27, 6 p.m.

A trio of presentations about the latest in solar energy

Two island organizations are pairing up to host a program about solar energy for island residents and businesses. The League of Women Voters of Sanibel and the Green Team of the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ (SCUCC) will present three speakers on Monday, March 27, at 6 p.m. The program will be at SCUCC, located at 2050 Periwinkle Way on Sanibel. Admission is free.

Keynote speaker James M. Fenton, Ph.D., director of

the Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC), will talk about recent changes in the market that are making solar energy less costly. Dr. Fenton's presentation, "Florida Solar State of the Market," was a hit at the recent Everglades Coalition Conference. He has been director of the University of Central Florida's FSEC since January 2005 and leads a staff of 85 in the research and development of energy technologies that both enhance Florida's and the nation's economy and environment and educate the public, students, and practitioners on the results of the research. FSEC, created in 1975 by the Florida Legislature to serve as the state's energy research institute, is the nation's largest and most active state-supported renewable energy and energy efficiency research institute. Dr. Fenton is also a professor in the university's Materials Science and Engineering Department.



Dr. James Fenton

Following the keynote presentation, John Lambie, executive director of the Florida House Institute, will speak about the solar co-operative that he and others formed in Sarasota and how they reduced the Florida House energy bill to zero. The Florida House was the first "green" building open to the public in the U.S. This house and its surrounding garden integrate scientific principles and sustainable living practices. The Florida House Institute's goal is to promote and advance sustainable practices that improve the quality of life for people in Florida's Gulf Coast.

The final presentation of the evening will be the story how Bailey's General Store has gone solar, as told by Richard Johnson, Bailey's manager. The solar installation was part of an overall "kilowatt diet" for the retail operation.

Information on solar co-operatives and tax credits will be available for residents and business owners who attend the event. For more information, [email Barbara Joy Cooley](mailto:Barbara.Joy.Cooley).

February 15 Program Review **OUR WATER CRISIS** **Highlights and Reactions** *by Mary LaVelle*

This was by far the best-attended lunch in years - and it deserved to be. We heard two highly committed, well-informed speakers who have opposite positions on Senate Bill 10/House Bill 761, which would commit \$100 million of Amendment 1 funds over the next 20 years to the purchase and development of



60,000 acres south of Lake O for storage, water quality improvement, and Everglades restoration.

Meghan McCoy's front page article in the February 22 Island Reporter gives an evenhanded report of much of what was said. Read that, please. What will follow here, instead of a lengthy rehash, are selected highlights and reactions.

First of all, Everglades restoration is a hugely complicated undertaking. It is far simpler to destroy an ecosystem than to attempt to put it back together. Both speakers agreed that the Everglades can never be what it once was. But for 17 years, CERP - the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan - has laid out a map for undoing the worst of the damage to this nowhere-else-in-the-entire-world place. And storage south of the lake is part of that plan.

Our spot on the Caloosahatchee estuary is collateral damage, as water that needs to flow south to the 'glades is shunted here instead in high rainfall years for flood control; in low rainfall years the water needs of this highly developed area, and agriculture, are given priority over maintaining balance in the estuary.

Mitch Hutchcraft, vice president for real estate for King Ranch and Consolidated Citrus, appointed by Governor Scott to the South Florida Water Management Board, explained that the replumbing of South Florida, designed to serve the water needs of 2 million people, now must serve more than 6 million. Any redo must work within the confines of that reality, as none of us are going away until ocean rise may force us out. He is a project guy and sees SB 10's "storage south" appropriations as a distraction from the many SFWMD projects that are already approved but not funded...\$1.3 BILLION worth.

Rae Ann Wessel, SCCF's advocate for the environment, sees instead in the current bills a unique opportunity to move forward on CERP's most vital element: moving water south where it is desperately needed, instead of east and west, where it wreaks havoc in wet years...storing it and cleaning it before letting it go. Our watershed now has half the open space to absorb water of what it once had.



Alan and Edina Lessack with Robyn Cook (at right)

So...random observations gleaned from these speakers:

Florida is now the third most populous state in the Union. We all use water. Average? 80 to 100 gallons per person per day. Permits give rights to water to development of all kinds....there are no permits for natural systems, and therefore no rights. What is the carrying capacity of our state?

There seem to be, owing to climate change, few "normal" rainfall years. Too

much or too little, both devastating to the ecosystem. Both storage capacity. This is the new normal! Needed: a million more acre feet of storage! What's an acre foot? 325,851 gallons. Or the amount of water that would cover an acre a foot deep. How big is an acre? 16 tennis courts, or about 3/4 of a football field.

During low rainfall times when there is a deficit of fresh water, salt water intrudes on our groundwater table. Wells are at risk, as are natural systems that depend on fresh water.

The level of Lake O cannot be raised for more storage without killing the marshes that ring it and help clean the water. The lake was once deeper and larger, but organic material is building up on the bottom. The gates that open to let water out of the lake open at the bottom. That's why the discharge is thick and dark.

One idea - injecting excess water deep underground north of Lake O - may work in high rainfall years, but then the water is unavailable during low rainfall times.

Lake O, and our estuary, now receive far more urban runoff from the highly developed Kissimmee watershed, which extends all the way to Orlando. This area once sent more agricultural waste south.

Water now goes into Lake O 5 to 6 times faster than it can be sent out. The Caloosahatchee basin itself adds more excess water - often polluted by urban sources - than Lake O. We cannot just point fingers.

Two main elements foul our water - nitrogen and phosphorous. Sixty percent of the nitrogen fouling our estuary is from Lake O. Phosphorus in the soil north of Lake O adds to this load of pollution.

There has to be a comprehensive design for water to exit Lake O, be stored, AND be cleaned before it is discharged to either the estuaries or the Everglades.

Both federal and state money is needed to move forward on water projects. Our new congressman, Francis Rooney, is spearheading efforts to gain federal funds. On the state level, our legislature has previously used almost \$3 million of Amendment 1 funds, which were mandated by overwhelming public support to be used to buy land and fund projects. to fund operating costs once covered by the annual budget. However, the state still spends more than the feds on Everglades restoration.

So is your head spinning like mine???

One way to unspin it: read the LWV position on water quality on pages 78 to 80 of the Study and Action book, [which you can access via this link](#).

Thursday, April 20
"Climate Change Challenges and Florida's Future"

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



James Murley

When: Thursday, April 20 - 11:30 a.m registration;
noon-2:00 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, April 17.

Cost: \$25 per person (includes lunch). 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, we will bill for unpaid or absent reservations. If you wish to attend only the program and not join us for lunch, please feel free to come at 12:30 p.m. to hear the speaker.



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.

Any questions? [Click here for more information.](#) [Or send us an email.](#)

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) _____

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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

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Barbara Joy Cooley, Vice President, Natural Resources

Ellen O'Neill, Secretary

Ellen Strobel, Treasurer

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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. Upcoming Board meeting dates for 2017 are 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.