



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF SANIBEL

# *The Voter*

[lwvsanibel.org](http://lwvsanibel.org)

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*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.*

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

## **Message from Robyn Cook, LWV Sanibel President**

Greetings members and friends of LWVS!

Here's hoping you all had a happy Thanksgiving with family and friends, on the island or in cooler parts of the country. Sanibel appears to be getting busier as sun seekers and "seasoners" arrive to shop, shell or hop on a bike.

Our first luncheon program of the season was a great success! Scroll down for a report on the excellent presentations by Howard Simon and John Cassani. We thank them both for their devotion to the subject of water quality and maintaining our environment in SWFL.

2020 is going to be a huge political year with the legislature in session beginning in January; two rounds of primaries, Presidential Preference on March 17 and General Election Primary on August 18; and the General Election in November. Keep your eyes on SWFL with open seats in the US House, State Senate (Dist. 27) and State House (Dist. 76), in addition to Lee County government seats and Lee County Commissioner seats. The impeachment activities have us riveted to whatever media we prefer and ready for just about anything. And keep some mind space for the race for the Presidency as both sides maneuver and manipulate along the way.

The Sanibel League publishes a Directory of Federal, State, and Local



Elected officials, in addition to key information about voting registration. Pick one up at the Sanibel Library. Then look for the League of Women Voters Voters Guide in October, as we near the General Election.

LWVS Board Member Linda Kramer, Voter Services chair, and her committee are gearing up for voter registration events around Sanibel throughout 2020. If you are a Florida resident and have not yet registered, you may do so online at [lee.electionsfl.org](http://lee.electionsfl.org). If you want to request ballots for federal, state and local elections for 2020, primary or general election ballots by mail, you may go to the above website or call **239-533-8683**. You must renew your request every two general elections. If you have questions, simply call the number listed above.

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy Hannukah!

Yours in League.....

*Robyn Cook*

## **Report from the League of Women Voters of Sanibel November 21, 2019, Luncheon "Water Currents 2.0"**

Chronic exposure to toxins from blue-green algae and red tide are related to a higher incidence of Alzheimer's Disease, ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease), and Parkinson's Disease, according to recent medical research. Beyond these health effects, red tide and blue-green algae blooms damage our tourism economy, lower our property values, and reduce our quality of life.

These issues and ways of addressing them were discussed during the November luncheon meeting of the Sanibel League of Women Voters. Presentations by John Cassani, Calusa Waterkeeper, and Howard L. Simon, Ph.D., Clean Okeechobee Waters Foundation, Inc., were titled Water Currents 2.0: Update and Review of Progress, Actions, Future Impacting Water Quality.

This topic is urgent and timely, as the 2020 Florida Legislative Session beginning January 14 will consider recommendations from the Blue Green Algae Task Force and the Red Tide Task Force established by Gov. Ron DeSantis. All Floridians who are concerned about our health, housing values, and the health of our economy have a stake in understanding these issues and in being sure that our legislators protect us by supporting measures to reduce the impact of these algal blooms.

Unfortunately, there are multiple causes of red tide and blue-green algal blooms, so there are no silver bullets to eliminate the dangerous toxins and the ecological and economic damage they produce. Nevertheless, basic factors are well understood: excess nutrients and an imbalance in the ratio of nitrogen and phosphorous. If there are excess nutrients and the balance of these chemicals is disrupted, algal blooms result, causing public health, environmental, and economic disasters.

Major factors contributing to these algal blooms include:

Florida has statutes outlining best practices for agribusiness, but there is a presumption of compliance with no enforcement. Results include use of human biosolids - human waste - along with other fertilizers for agricultural crops. Much of the runoff from these fertilizers ends up in Lake Okeechobee, and from there flows down the Caloosahatchee and other rivers into the Gulf and the Atlantic, providing fertile conditions for algal blooms. Biosolids for fertilizer typically come from densely populated Southeast Florida and are sold to agribusiness in Northern Florida. While contributing less than agribusiness, golf courses are another major source of fertilizer runoff.

Florida has about 2.6 million septic tanks - about 10% of all septic tanks in the U.S. - and they leach nitrogen into the groundwater. The state doesn't require inspections of septic tanks, and as a result, we have many small leaks as well as major leaks. To minimize this, Florida should require regular septic system inspections, strongly encourage septic-to-sewer system conversion, and ban any further development based on septic systems. The state budget should include grants to local governments to help make these conversions.

Sea level rise is another threat, as this raises the water table and increases the likelihood of fertilizer leaking into the groundwater.

The economy and environment of Southwest Florida have experienced devastating impacts that have escalated over the past couple of years. Unless actions are taken by our state legislators to mitigate the many causes of algal blooms, we will have a ticking time bomb for a public disaster over the next 30 years or so. To prevent this, Florida must implement in full - not water down - the recommendations of these high level task forces.

Florida has passed legislation that over time would go far toward improving our water quality. Unfortunately, during the

administration of former Gov. Rick Scott, and under the leadership of the past state legislators, implementation and enforcement of these statutes was prevented through lack of funding.

It is urgent for Florida citizens to let our political leaders know our concerns about addressing destructive algal blooms by passing a state budget that funds in full the measures recommended by the Blue Green Algal Task Force and the Red Tide Task Force.

The Sanibel League of Women Voters sponsors presentations on key issues the second Thursday of each month during the winter season. Upcoming programs will focus on challenges to Constitutional protections and on the environment. A special program will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment granting women's suffrage, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters, and the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Sanibel League of Women Voters. For further information on programs or to join the Sanibel League, use the Membership application below or go to [lwvsanibel.org](http://lwvsanibel.org).

Submitted by Christine Schluter



**LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF SANIBEL**

Don't forget to renew your membership  
for 2019-2020.

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 U.S., League of Women Voters 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 at \$125. Membership is open to all residents of the U.S. Men, as well as women, are welcome to join. Non-U.S. citizens may join as nonvoting members. Sanibel residency is not a requirement. We are a 501(c)(4) organization.

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 supporting 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 |

## League of Women Voters Sanibel 2019-2020 Luncheon 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 2:00 p.m.



Thursday, January 16, 2020

Environmental Impacts on Florida Coastline

Speaker: TBA

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Challenges to Constitutional Protections

Speaker: TBA

Thursday, March 19, 2020

Causes & Effects of SWFL Land Development

Speaker: TBA

Thursday, April 16, 2020

LWV Annual Meeting & 10th Anniversary Celebration

Program & Speaker: TBA

Lunch meals are \$25 per person. Deadline to reserve is the Monday of the week of the Thursday luncheon/program.

\*Program topics and speakers subject to change

## 2019-2020 LWV Sanibel Officers and Directors

Robyn Cook, President

Ellen O'Neill, Vice President, Programs

Chris Schluter, Secretary

Bob Terry, Treasurer

Dorit Fisher, Membership

Linda Kramer, Voter Services

Bobbie Moore, Director

Appointed Directors:

Janice Block Chaddock

Jeannie & Ron Ellington

Maddie Stewart

2020-2021 Nominating Committee

Robin Krivanek (Chair), Judy Adler, Dick Calkins, Linda Kramer

LWVS Founding Mothers





Carla Benninga, Linda Kramer,  
Linda Robison

### **LWW 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 the next five months are December 12, January 9, February 13, March 12, and April 9.