



The Voter

lwvsanibel.org

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Our Mission:

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan 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 photos below, click on "display images" in your email program.

Message from Robyn Cook, LWV Sanibel President

Greetings to all LWVS members and supporters!

Amazing how beginning around May 15 the island population dwindles, traffic is decongested, and restaurant waits are slim to none. And so your local League also goes on a bit of hiatus until our friends and neighbors return for the 2018-2019 "season"

But fear not, loyal friends, we begin in earnest in October and continue on through April, 2019.



(left to right) Carla Benninga, Robyn Cook, Robin Krivanek at the Arbor

Thanks to founder Carla Benninga, now living at Shell Point, the LWV Sanibel held a voter registration drive on Monday, July 9 at the Arbor at Shell Point. It was such a pleasure working with many of the residents there to help them register to vote, check the status of their registrations and help them receive ballots by mail. Because the ballot in November will also feature 13 amendments, the vote-by-mail ballot seems apropos for some. If you would like to receive a ballot to mail or if you need to renew your request (you must renew every two general elections), please call the Supervisor of Elections office at 239-533-8683. They will walk you through a few questions and get you going so that you are ready to vote *Your* way.

Most of you are politically alert and likely aware of all the events that are taking place in the lead up to the November 6 mid-term elections. As of this writing, we are in the

midst of a Supreme Court vacancy and the activities surrounding the choice to fill the seat of Justice Anthony Kennedy. We are also continuing to watch, march and raise our voices regarding the separation of children from their parents as a result of the "zero tolerance" immigration policy. And as primaries come and go all over the country, we try to stay informed and calm through the fog of politics as they are today.

With the Florida August 28 Primary clearly in view and if you are able to attend, there are a few opportunities available for you to meet the primary candidates sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Lee County. All of the candidate forums will be held at the Alliance for the Arts, 10091 McGregor, Fort Myers, 33919 and all of them are at 6:00 pm. Dates are as follows:

July 12 School Board District 6
July 19 State Attorney General
August 2 U.S. House Seat 19

As the summer progresses, we are certain there will be many more opportunities for you to become an informed voter. The League of Women Voters Florida will publish their helpful Voters Guide which you will be able to pick up at the Sanibel Library in the late summer or early fall, or it will be available in a fall issue of the weekly Island Reporter. The LWV is also supporting the "Vote 411" website which will provide information all about the issues, amendments and candidates that will be specific to your ballot. More on that later.

The Annual Meeting of the Sanibel LWV was held on April 18 at the Sundial Beach Resort. It featured Dr. Madelon Stewart, SW Florida delegate to Vision 2020, a coalition of national and local organizations that work for equal rights and opportunities. Her presentation on "Suffrage, Voter Rights and Voter Suppression" was highly informative and is summarized below in a report by Sanibel League member Mary LaVelle.

At the Annual meeting portion of the program, the members present voted on the slate of officers and directors for 2018-2019. In addition, the members approved the upcoming programs for the season. The new Board of Directors, officers and committees are listed below. Also scroll down for Luncheon Program dates and topics, and the dates of the upcoming Board meetings.

And last but not least, League Member and past Board President Robin Krivanek would like you Sanibel "die hards" to join her for lunch at Cip's Restaurant on Thursday, July 26 at Noon. A fun way to keep in touch, share stories and generally catch up on goings on around town. Please call Robin by July 24 if you can come at 239-395-0927.

Enjoy your summer!

***Yours "in League",
Robyn Cook***

**SANIBEL LWV
EXPLORES SUFFRAGE
at the 2018 Annual Meeting**

Reported by Mary LaVelle

Dr. Madelon Stewart was the featured speaker at the Sanibel League's Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 18. Her subject was at the heart of the LWV mission: the right to vote.

The right to vote is not enshrined in the 1776 Declaration of Independence, which famously declared that "all men are created equal". Nor is it mentioned in the Articles of Confederation, nor in the 1789 Constitution of the United States. That is a surprise to many people!



Not until the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution were passed in 1868 and 1870 was the right to vote-by male citizens-- made part of that document. It was 1920 before the 19th amendment to the Constitution was passed-by ONE vote in the Tennessee legislature!-to ensure women's right to vote. The long struggle for suffrage, first for former slaves and then for women, is part of the proud history of the founders of the League of Women Voters.

In the brief period of Reconstruction after the Civil War, suffrage was extended to former slaves. Then that window snapped closed with the adoption of Jim Crow laws in the South and more subtle discrimination in the North, aimed at disenfranchising-and terrorizing--minorities. Dr. Martin Luther King and other civil rights leaders, in the mid-Twentieth Century, recognized that voting was the essential right from which all others flowed. The landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965 finally codified our democracy into law.

While armed Citizens Councils no longer stand in courthouse doors, active measures have never ceased while some powers-that-be attempt to suppress this essential right. Lawsuits resulted in a Supreme Court decision modifying the Voting Rights Act. Gerrymandering means that some votes have no meaning-an election is a foregone conclusion. Limited voting hours, closing polling places, long lines, falsehoods about voter fraud, demands for only certain forms of identification, closed primaries---all discourage voting. Even a person who has served his/her time and been released for a minor crime is not allowed to vote in states like Florida. Far too many eligible voters simply do not believe that their vote matters. In the past election, over 200 million people were eligible to vote. Only 149 million registered to vote....and only 58% of eligible citizens actually voted. (That actually is better than usual---the USA lags behind many countries in percentage of voting citizens.)

While the League of Women Voters continues to promote civic engagement in more traditional ways such as study, education, candidates' forums, and voter registration, the organization has expanded efforts to serve as a resource for young people like those who have become active in the wake of the Marjorie Stoneman Douglass HS shooting. LWV's Project ROAR-Reach out and Register-is where young people can turn for information as they become active citizens, an important service since Civics classes are no longer widely available in schools.



Online Registration Now Available for Florida Residents

You may have heard that Florida residents may now register to vote online. In October 2017 Florida joined approximately 35 other states plus the District of Columbia in offering online voter registration as an option for their residents. Visit RegisterToVoteFlorida.gov which is the secure, convenient and easy-to-use voter registration website. Any Florida resident who is eligible to vote or is already registered to vote in Florida can use it. You may register to vote, update a registration record, or fill out a voter registration application to print, sign, and deliver to your Supervisor of Elections.

Mark Your Calendars! LWV Sanibel 2018-2019 Programs

All luncheon/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 p.m.



Thursday, November 15
Post Election Wrap Up: Speaker TBD

Thursday, January 17
Is Democracy Working?: Speaker TBD

Thursday, February 21
Immigration: Speaker TBD

Thursday, March 21
Reproductive Health: Speaker TBD

Thursday, April 18
Annual Meeting; Social Justice & Drinking Water: Speaker TBD

Luncheon meals are \$25 per person.* To reserve your place, [email the LWV](#) with the names of those attending. You can pay at the door or mail your check to LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel FL 33957.

The deadline to make reservations is by NOON on Monday of the week of the Thursday luncheon/program. Please note: Because LWV Sanibel is required to pay for each meal, unpaid and absent reservations will be billed.



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
OF SANIBEL

**Don't Forget to Renew Your Membership
for 2018-19
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. Questions? Email us at lwvsanibel@gmail.com.

Please make your check to 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: email lwvsanibel@gmail.com

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OF SANIBEL**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone (mobile): _____

Phone (home): _____

E-mail: _____

Please select your annual membership level:

\$125 Susan B. Anthony membership _____

\$95 Household membership _____

\$65 Individual membership _____

\$30 Student membership _____

TOTAL _____

Please circle your areas of interest:

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

2018-2019 LWV Sanibel Officers and Directors

- Robyn Cook, President
- Maria O'Brien, Vice President
- Bob Terry, Treasurer
- Chris Schluter, Secretary
- Nancy Elting, Director, Voter Services
- John Kramer, Director
- Barbara Moore, Director
- Rick Siders, Director

Jean Ely, Appointed Director
Susan Heisler, Appointed Director
Carla Benninga, Director Emerita
Off Board: Dorit Fisher, Membership
Barbara Freeman, Communications

2018-2019 Nominating Committee
Robin Krivanek (Chair), Judy Adler, Linda Kramer, Bob Terry

LWV Sanibel Board Meetings

Members are invited to attend all board meetings, which are held at Noon during the second Thursday of the month at the Sanibel-Captiva Community Bank: October 18, November 7 (Wednesday), December 13, January 10, February 14, March 14, April 11.

League of Women Voters of Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957

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