



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 a photo below, click on "display images" in your email program.

Message from Robyn Cook, LWV Sanibel President

Spotlight on Voter Services

We often take for granted that the word "voters" is the most important word (and work) in our name.....League of Women Voters. We focus on policies and issues and hot topics, yes, but the core of our democracy is the essential act of voting. Getting registered, getting educated, getting to the polls. Getting there and to where you want this country to be.

This year, your League is going to push extra hard to support the registration of voters and then getting voters to VOTE! We have put together an energetic and enthusiastic Voter Services team chaired by Board Director, Nancy Elting. In the works are arrangements to register voters on the island at the Farmers Market, Bailey's and elsewhere. They are also in contact with the Lee County League of Women Voters to support them in their efforts to register voters in Fort Myers at college campuses, hospitals, churches, and so on. This might be a first partnership between the two Leagues and that is why when we say "in League", we mean it. For those of you who have signed up to volunteer as registrars, you have received [email about how to be certified](#)



and hope you will complete that easy task. You will receive detailed information about how to help as the weeks go by. Most of the activities will take place in the spring months before many of our residents who are eligible as Florida voters leave for the summer and will resume in October prior to the 2018 mid term elections.

Please feel free contact Nancy Elting at eltingnancy@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer or have other questions.

Coming up are the March 15 and April 19 luncheon programs. Both of these events are highlighted below. We understand how busy your calendars can be during March and through Easter/Passover, so mark your calendars early. The outstanding guest speakers and the view from Sundial Resort are always swell!

Finally, at the February luncheon, we had two outstanding experts speak on the topic of trends, problems and solutions for K-12 education. Please scroll down for the complete report provided by Christine Schluter, LWVS Board member.

Your voices and ideas are important to us! Don't hesitate to pass along your thoughts for programs, forums, or policies that are of interest to you. Drop us a note at P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel FL 33957, or [email us](#). We would love to hear from you!

LWVSanibel is now on Facebook!

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



On the horizon! Gas Effects on South Florida Ecosystems and Citizens

LWV of Sanibel Program and Luncheon
Thursday, March 15, 2018

Speaker: Richard Bartleson, PH.D.,
Sanibel-Captiva Conservation
Foundation, Marine Lab



Greenhouse gas concentrations are rising and the planet is warming. Environmental data shows dramatic changes already and models indicate South Florida's ecosystems and coastal residents will soon be affected.

Sanibel is a dynamic, barrier island community with the distinct privilege of having the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation on-island, fully staffed with highly educated and experienced researchers. We are honored to feature a respected member of the SCCF staff at the March 15, 2018 LWV of Sanibel luncheon.

Dr. Richard Bartleson is a nationally renowned research scientist with wide-ranging studies in the areas of Biology and Environmental Engineering Sciences, and with a Ph.D. in Environmental Science, Marine, Estuarine and Environmental Studies. Rick is currently at work on SCCF research and monitoring projects having to do with seagrass, hypoxia, and brevetoxin monitoring, and biological nutrient removal. His specific area of expertise has to do with seagrass and water column interactions.

Dr. Bartleson will share with luncheon attendees an overview of his research findings as related to our local and regional beaches; sea level resilience; and the impact of climate change on water quality. Most Sanibel and Captiva island visitors and residents are highly aware of the state of our surrounding and inland waters and how they can impact not only our own homes, but also the entire regional economy. One can only imagine, had Hurricane Irma surged the 10-15 expected feet onto our beaches, just how destructive this would have been to coastline, environment, habitats, and properties. Dr. Bartleson will help us understand his Marine Lab work and how it will affect the future of the barrier islands we love.

When: Thursday, March 15. Registration 11:30 a.m. for the noon to 2 p.m. luncheon program. Q&A will follow the presentation.

Where: Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Drive

RSVP: [Click here](#) to reserve by email, or call Robin Krivanek at 239-395-0927. Deadline to RSVP is by Noon, Monday, March 12.

Cost: \$25 per person. Mail your check with the names of all attendees to: LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel 33957. Or you may pay at the door. LWV Sanibel is required to pay for each reserved meal, so persons with unpaid or absent reservations will be billed.

Mark Your Calendars!
League of Women Voters of Sanibel
Annual Meeting & Program
Thursday, April 19, 2018

Featured Speaker:
Madelon V. Stewart, Ed.D.,
Vision 2020 Delegate
"Suffrage, Voting Rights, and
Voter Suppression"



The 2018 mid-term elections are coming in November and women are engaged in ever more increasing numbers. The election of the new president in 2016 triggered an incredibly strong reaction from women of all stripes all around the country and the world. It emboldened women, and men as well, to speak out and step up.

Dr. Madelon Stewart will be our distinguished speaker at the League of Women Voters of Sanibel Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 19 at the Sundial Beach Resort. Dr. Stewart will first provide us with a brief history of suffrage for both men and women. She will discuss the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and provide us with an historical and current review of voter suppression tactics.

She will provide us with an in-depth introduction to Vision 2020, a coalition of national and local organizations working for equal rights and opportunities for women. One of the priority goals of this project is to make sure that all women eligible to vote are registered to do so by 2020. Ambitious? Yes! Dr. Stewart is a SW Florida delegate to Vision 2020, founded by Lynn Yeakel, part time Sanibel resident and founder of Vision 2020 through Drexel University in Philadelphia. The "vision" is based on the idea that taking action can complete the unfinished business of economic, political and social equality for women. It is a four-pronged approach:

1. 50-50 Shared Leadership among women and men in business and government
2. Civic Engagement leading to 100 percent of eligible women voting in 2020
3. Economic Parity in pay and benefits for women
4. Youth Education that supports gender equality

Dr. Stewart earned both her doctorate and M.Ed from Teachers College, Columbia University, and an M.S. from The Bank Street College of Education in NYC. She has enjoyed a rewarding career as a consultant and educator, with an emphasis on translating educational theory into useful, results-oriented programs and projects. She has worked as a professor in the College of Education at Rider University. Her prior positions included long-range planning at Temple University, WNET/Thirteen in NYC, and the City College of NY. In addition to her work with Vision 2020, she works with the Randell Research Center on Pine Island coordinating with staff and volunteers to develop a curriculum introducing 4th graders to the Calusa culture.

Her goal in all her activities is to develop collaborative relationships with individuals and organizations to increase the level of awareness of ideas and issues, and civic engagement across the community.

Following our speaker, we will ask LWVS members to stay for the 2018-2019 business meeting which will include the slate of directors and officers for 2018-2019; future luncheon topics and schedule; and approval of the 2018-2019 Budget.

When: Thursday, April 19. Registration 11:30 a.m. for the noon to 2 p.m. luncheon program. Q&A will follow the presentation.

Where: Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Drive

RSVP: [Click here](#) to reserve by email, or call Robin Krivanek at 239-395-0927. Deadline to RSVP is by Noon, Monday, April 16.

Cost: \$25 per person. Mail your check with the names of all attendees to: LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel 33957. Or you may pay at the door. LWV Sanibel is required to pay for each reserved meal, so persons with unpaid or absent reservations will be billed.

Report from the League of Women Voters of Sanibel February Luncheon

Experts Discuss Trends and Solutions in K-12 Education

Submitted by Christine Schluter

Two Lee County educators with decades of educational leadership experience discussed trends and problems in K-12 education and suggested solutions at the monthly League of Women Voters of Sanibel program held at the Sundial Beach Resort on Thursday, February 15.



Nancy Elting (left) & Dr. Jane Kuckel
photo courtesy of Maree Elowson

Lee County School Board Vice Chair and former Assistant Superintendent, Jane Kuckel, and Nancy Elting, former Head of the Spence School and The School at Columbia University, both in New York City, each taught for decades before assuming top school leadership positions.

Kuckel noted that the Lee County School System is one of Florida's largest and fastest growing, with about 97,000 students in K-12. It is growing by about 1,400 students annually. The system includes traditional, charter, and virtual schools. (The latter offer strictly online learning.)

The County's 24 charter schools enrolled 11,716 students last year. Nine of the 24 are for-profit schools operated by USA Charter. Three other charter schools are operated by non-profit organizations. Lee County charter schools are not subject to School District requirements designed to help ensure quality of education, such as specific teacher qualifications, teacher pay levels, student-teacher ratio, and teacher retirement plans. Lee County has only two employees to monitor and supervise the curriculum, budget, and staff of the 24 charter schools-far too few to provide meaningful accountability and ensure quality.

The charter schools vary widely in focus and effectiveness. Every student graduating from the charter school operated by Florida Southwest College has earned both a high school diploma and an Associate's Degree. Some charter schools are career academies: Students graduating in HVAC can earn annual salaries of \$30,000-\$40,000 immediately after graduating. Those earning a Microsoft certificate typically earn \$60,000-\$70,000, and those graduating with training in other fields, such as welding, also earn large starting salaries. Some charter schools focus on students in jeopardy of dropping out, providing individualized education at the student's own pace, online courses, and night classes so that students can work during the day. Many charter schools, however, have weaker outcomes than Florida public schools.

Elting stated that all good private schools choose to be accredited, that is, certified by a panel of peers that they meet state requirements and standards. Private schools like the Spence School in New York City provide outstanding education, choose to be held accountable through a rigorous evaluation and accreditation by peers, and have strong outcomes. Locally, the Canterbury School also chooses to undergo an accreditation process that guarantees accountability for offering a quality educational program. The public should be leery of any school that is not accredited.

Another kind of private school in Florida, Elting said, is state funded and serves students with special needs. Special needs students can apply to the Florida-Gardiner Scholarship Program or the McKay Scholarship Program. These programs allow students to use public school funding to attend a specialized private school or to pay for tutoring, online education, home educations, therapy, etc. These programs serve 37,000 Florida students.

Florida students can also apply for a Florida tax credit scholarship. This is a voucher-like program. It allows the state to give tax credits to corporations that contribute to a nonprofit scholarship funding organization (SFO), which then awards scholarships to children.

This program allows policy makers to skirt constitutional bans on funding private, including religious, schools. The tax credit for 2017-18 is \$698,852,539. The League of Women Voters estimates that next year \$1 billion will be funneled from Florida public schools to tax credit scholarship schools.

- These schools are not required to have certified teachers.
- They are not required to do background checks on teachers or staff.
- There is no curriculum oversight.
- Students are not required to take state assessments.
- Seventy percent of the schools funded by the Florida tax credit program are religious.
- These schools are predominantly small, located in shopping malls.
- In 2016, state education officials inspected only 22 out of nearly 2,000 private schools funded with tax dollars and corporate-tax credits.
- One-third of students in these schools return to public school within one year. One half return to public school within two years.

The Brookings Institute reports that Florida tax credit students do worse academically, and fewer go to college than students graduating from Florida public schools.

Elting offered the Columbia University Laboratory School as combining the best of the private, public, and charter schools. It is a K-8th school run by Columbia University. Fifty percent of the students are children of the University's faculty; 50% come from New York's upper west side through a lottery system.

- Students can arrive at 7:30 and have both breakfast and lunch at school. Faculty members work 8:15-3:30.
- Special education teachers help students overcome learning challenges. Class size is geared to age and subject matter, so teachers teach instead of focusing on crowd control.
- From 3:30-6 pm students work on homework, participate in sports programs, or receive enrichment in academics, the arts, chess, robotics, etc. They are taught by a new shift of staff members or by teachers who wish to supplement their income.
- Summer school is provided for the month of July for students who are struggling academically.

Elting stated that the Columbia University Laboratory School educates children living in projects, whose native language is not English, as well as from affluent, highly educated families. The graduation rate is outstanding, and graduates of the school go on to graduate from competitive public or private schools and then on to success in higher education and in life regardless of their socioeconomic background.

Such education is expensive, but not nearly as expensive as allowing our educational system to fail students, who then become unproductive members of society, or worse ending up in prison. In 2014, one in every 100 U.S. citizens was behind bars, costing over \$80 billion annually. Florida spends \$7,000 annually to educate a student but \$20,000 annually to incarcerate a prisoner. Our state and country would be far better off if we invested in children early on in order to avoid the much higher costs of unproductive or incarcerated citizens.



Online Registration Now Available for Florida Residents

You may have heard that Florida residents may now register to vote online. As of Oct. 1, 2017, Florida joins 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 that you may print, sign, and deliver to your Supervisor of Elections.

LWV Sanibel 2018 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 p.m.



Thursday, March 15, 2018

Gas Effects on South Florida Ecosystems and Citizens

Speaker: Rick Bartleson, PH.D.

Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation Marine Lab

Thursday, April 19, 2018

LWV Sanibel Annual Meeting

Program: Vision 2020, Suffrage, Voting Rights, and Voter Suppression

Speaker: Madelon Stewart, Ed.D., Florida State Delegate, Vision 2020

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.

*You may also pay in advance and save! Your check for \$100 covers all 5 luncheons. Pay at the door prior to the first luncheon, or mail your check to the address above.

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 2017-2018
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 lwsanibel@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

Name: _____

**LEAGUE OF
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Address: _____

Phone (mobile): _____

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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

Local Government

Fundraising

Health Care

Sustainability/Natural Resources

Publicity

Membership

Hot Topics

Education

Hospitality/Events

2017-2018 LWW Sanibel Officers and Directors

Robyn Cook, President

Barbara Joy Cooley, Vice President, Natural Resources

Robin Krivanek, Treasurer and Membership

Maria O'Brien, Secretary

Nancy Elting, Director, Voter Services

Chris Schluter, Director

Ellen Strobel, Director

Bob Terry, Director

Carla Benninga, Director Emerita

2017-2018 Nominating Committee

Robin Krivanek (Chair), Erhard Joeres, Ellen O'Neill

LWV Sanibel Board Meetings

Members are invited to attend all board meetings, which are held at noon during the second week of the month at the Sanibel-Captiva Community Bank. Board meeting dates for 2018 are Monday, March 12 and Thursday, April 12.

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

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