Greetings from Robin Krivanek, LWV Sanibel President

Dear Leaguers:

Welcome to 2015, an 'off-year' for state and federal elections but an 'on-year' for Sanibel. March 3rd is the scheduled date for this year's city council election with two of the five members up for reelection and January 16th is the deadline by which candidates must file papers to qualify for election. But more important now for League members is to make sure that our ever-changing island population is registered to vote. Each one of you can take part, either by helping with registration or by spreading the word. Dick Calkins, our dedicated Voter Services Chair, gives all the information below.

On the program schedule for January is a wonderful opportunity to meet and hear from Nola Theiss, who is a past mayor of Sanibel and now focuses her concerns on human trafficking, Lee County being a major hot spot in the U.S. This January 28th meeting is also a great opportunity to introduce a guest to our organization.

I hope you have all been following the emails from the state League outlining the major projects for the year. We are a small League, mostly seasonal, and only in our sixth year of existence, so in a sense we are still feeling our way. Do we want to have study and action committees on state issues or is our currently level of involvement what is sustainable? Are we meeting your expectations as
a member? As your Board plans for the year ahead, we’d love to hear from each of you on these questions and especially to hear what role you’d like to play in our Sanibel League. We’re here for you but only if we hear from you.

Slavery in Southwest Florida:
It's Happening Here

LWV Sanibel Luncheon and Program, 28 January

HTAP, founded in 2005 on Sanibel, has had a wide impact on developing awareness of human trafficking, which is a significant problem in south Florida. Nola Theiss, HTAP founding director, will bring us up to date on what is happening locally in terms of cases, victim services, outreach efforts, programs and law enforcement, and Florida and national laws. In SWFL, over 250 victims were identified and helped between 2009 and 2013 with a dramatic 50% increase between 2012-2013. Protecting our children from harm is a key element of a good quality of life in any community.

Speaker:
Nola Theiss,
Executive Director, Human Trafficking Awareness Partnerships, Inc.

Where:
Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Dr, Sanibel.

When:
Wednesday, January 28, 2015, 11:30 Registration, 12:00, noon, luncheon & program.

Reservations and Cost:
Click here to email LWV Program Chair, Ellen Stilwell, with your reservation.
Ellen O'Neill, with your reservation or call her at 239-395-1019. Cost is $25 per person. You can pay at the door or send your check to LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957. RSVP deadline is January 25.

If you have already paid for 5 of the 6 LWV Sanibel programs, we have your name and reservation, but recommend that you confirm your attendance. Click here to send an email confirming your attendance.

LWV Sanibel 2015 Voter Registration Drive

Do you have friends or neighbors who are new residents of Florida? Help them register to vote!

The League of Women Voters Sanibel is holding its annual Voter Registration Drive. Anyone who has recently established residency in Lee County, or who needs an address, name, or party affiliation change, may take advantage of conveniently registering on Sanibel Island. A person must be registered at least 29 days before the City of Sanibel election to be held on March 3, 2015.

Members of the League have been trained to serve as registrars and had a table at the Sanibel Farmers' Market on Sunday, January 4. Additional Voter Registration tables will be at Bailey's General Store on two Saturdays, January 10 and January 17, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

For information regarding League activities visit our website at www.lwvsanibel.org.

Need more information? Call LWV Sanibel Vice President and Voter Services Chair, Dick Calkins at 395-1751.
Our Holiday Party

LWV Sanibel thanks the many people who helped to make our Holiday Party a celebratory event. We extend special gratitude to our hosts, Martha and Rick Siders, and our organizers, Ellen Strobel and Ellen O'Neill.

LWV Florida Board Report

By Carolyn Gray, Second Vice President, LWV Florida

The LWV Florida Board met in Miami and Coral Gables on November 7 and 8, 2014. The November 7 meeting of the Board focused on the Education Fund. It is important for members to note that the Education Fund is a charitable organization that restricts the activities that can be supported by the fund to voter registration and education. The treasurer reported total assets of $288,930.00; liabilities of $107,699.65; Total equity of $181,230.79, of which $60,000 is in restricted funds. We are encouraging members to become Harry T. Burns donors, which requires a $1000 tax deductible donation.

Following the Education Fund meeting, we had a wonderful party hosted by the Coral Gables League. This is a tradition for many of our
On Saturday, November 8, we met at the Coral Gables Library for the Advocacy Fund meeting. Debbie Harrison Rumberger, who is our state lobbyist, expects there to be a food fight over funding and implementation of Amendment 1 (Water & Land Legacy). Rumberger suggests: 1. We should all be vigilant in terms of monitoring the legislative session as it gets underway to help ensure our legislators implement the amendment. Funding from Amendment 1 needs to be funded at $300M per year under Florida Forever. Ideally, that should be divided equally for acquisition of land and restoration projects. 2. We need to educate the public about Medicaid expansion. 3. And we should monitor what is happening with school vouchers, as public money is being taken from public schools to fund charter schools that are not accountable to the public.

Pam Goodman reported on the Fair Districts lawsuit making its way to the Supreme Court, which has scheduled oral arguments for March 4, 2015.

The last part of our meeting was devoted to priority setting. Board priorities for 2015 are:

1. Medicaid Expansion
2. Implementation of Amendment One
3. Stop legislation for funding of educational vouchers for private Charter schools.

The Board encourages people to register for the Legislative Assembly and Summit in Tallahassee, March 10-11.

Your LWV Sanibel is a growing organization. We welcome the following new members.

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[Image: LWV Sanibel Logo]
We note with sorrow that long time LWV Sanibel member Sue Francis died unexpectedly on December 25, 2015. A memorial service will be held at 7 p.m. on Sunday, February 8, 2015, in the Fellowship Hall at the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ, 2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel.

SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR SPEAKS AT LWV SANIBEL PROGRAM
By Mary E. La Velle

The League of Women Voters of Sanibel recently hosted Cathleen O’Daniel Morgan, who has been re-elected Chair of the Lee County School Board, and Dr. Jane Kuckel, who spent twelve years on the Board before retiring. Morgan was previously on the School Board of Rye, New York; she formerly worked for JPMorgan/Chase. Kuckel came to the Board with long experience in education from teaching to administration.

In this past November’s election, Lee County voted to expand the current School Board from five to seven members. Starting in 2016, five will be elected from geographic districts; two will run for at-large seats.

Given the complicated challenges faced by the Lee County School
faced by the Lee County School District, it is important that voters know as much as possible about the present School Board, and about candidates who will stand for election two years from now.

The League of Women Voters is dedicated to an informed electorate.

Did you know that:

- The Lee County School District is the county's second largest employer (Lee Memorial is first), and is a $1.5 billion corporation.
- Our school district is the 34th largest in the USA.
- Lee County children come from 159 countries and speak 98 different languages; we are now a majority-minority district.
- Florida schools rank 42nd in the country in K-12 achievement, 41st in per-pupil expenditures, and 46th in teacher salaries.
- Originally 70% of funds raised by the Florida Lottery went to Florida's schools; now it is 48%.
- Unfunded mandates from the State Legislature continue to rise.
- Of our 120 schools, 24 are charter schools, the largest number in the state; half of those are run by for-profit corporations.
- Although the County and its school population continue to grow, sometimes adding 2000 students a year, impact fees levied by the County Board that should support school construction are not sufficient.
- Over 700 school buses travel over 65,000 miles a day, transporting over 50,000 students over the 900 square miles of the County.
- The State Board of Education is appointed by the Governor and serves at his pleasure.
- Florida Gulf Coast University has eliminated its Teacher Education major.
- Our County's schools are run on the principal of open enrollment. A third of students get their first choice of school right away. Ultimately 93% are settled where they first wanted to be.
- Half of Lee County's kids start in one school in August and end the year in another—a challenging scenario for both teachers and students.

State mandating testing is a complicated subject that deserves in-depth discussion in the press and elsewhere.
January 28
  Human Trafficking Awareness Partnership by Nola Theiss.
February 25
  City Council Candidates Night OR History of the Florida Judicial Branch (if election for Sanibel City Council is not contested)
March 25
  "Are We Making Progress?" A Water Quality Legislation Up-Date with Rae Ann Wessel, SCCF Director of Natural Resource Policy
April 22

All luncheon programs will be held at the Sundial Beach Resort (1451 Middle Gulf Rd.) with registration beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Travel With The League

Each year, your state League organizes a number of special trips designed to engage, educate, and enchant you.

Delray Beach -- LWV Florida state convention 15 - 16 May 2015

Join your fellow Leaguers to commemorate LWVF State President Deirdre Macnab as she reaches the end of her term! This event will bring members from all across the state together for two days of exciting activities, including an oceanside gala, an evening of live music and more! Participants will also learn about the League's issues via caucuses and educational workshops, and will help shape LWVF's 2015-2017 Program during Plenary sessions at the historic Old School Square Crest Theater! Click here for more details.

Alaska -- 15 - 22 June 2015
Seize the opportunity to travel to the Last Frontier on the trip of a lifetime! Next summer, the League of Women Voters of Florida and the League of Women Voters of Juneau are hosting a week-long trip to Alaska -- and we want you to join us!

Explore the Mendenhall Glacier and hike Nugget Falls; ride the Mt. Roberts Tramway for breathtaking views of Juneau; pan for gold in an Alaskan gold mine; visit a small Native American settlement; travel by boat to the Tracy Arm fjord for incredible views of icebergs, glaciers & wildlife; go whale-watching; get an inside look at Juneau's government and much more! Click here for more details.

LWV Sanibel Revises Membership Dues Deadlines

Last spring, your LWV Sanibel Board revised the membership year to run from October 1 to September 30th. Members who have already renewed their memberships will have valid memberships until September 30, 2015.

If you have friends and neighbors who might be interested in joining, please forward to them this issue of The Voter and note the membership application form below.
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 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 Board Meetings 2014-2015

Members are invited to attend all Board meetings which are held at 3:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday (excepting October and May) of the month. Meeting dates are January 14, February 11, March 11, April 8, and May 6th. The Board meets at the Bank of the Islands.
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.