



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

# *The Voter*

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

Volume 7 Issue 6

April 2016

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

## Message from Robin Krivanek, LWV Sanibel President

Greetings, Leaguers:

It is with great pleasure that I share with you the news that the speaker at our Annual Meeting on April 21st will be the three-term, immediate past President of the League of Women Voters of Florida, Deirdre Macnab. During her tenure, the Fair District amendments to the state constitution were achieved, as well as the Land and Water Legacy amendment, and a number of exciting court victories involving the protection of voting rights. However, not one to be defined by her past, Ms. Macnab has moved on to be the State League's Chair for Natural Resources Advocacy, and, in her words, is determined to make the Sunshine State the leader in solar and energy independence "one rooftop at a time." This will be a great opportunity for new and potential members of the League to hear from one of the League's leading lights.

As many of you prepare to leave for a while, please check that your mail ballot has been ordered for the August 30th primary election. That election has something for everyone whether a party member or not and this year, thanks to the state legislature, there will even be a proposed constitutional amendment to eliminate property taxes on rooftop solar equipment. The League of Women



Voters of Florida is urging approval of this proposal.

Now, as I complete my second term as president of the Sanibel League, I want to thank you all for this opportunity to be involved once again with this amazingly effective organization and I look forward to seeing you at the April 21st annual meeting when we elect the officers and directors of the Sanibel League for 2016-17 and adopt next season's programs. Upward and onward!



## DID YOU KNOW?

**Florida, the Sunshine State, is one of only FOUR states across the USA that prohibit citizens from buying electricity from any company other than a utility company. This prohibition blocks consumer choice and the growth of solar power.**

**LWV Sanibel Luncheon  
& Program**

**Thursday April 21, 2016**

**Our Speaker is Deidre Macnab,**  
Chair Natural Resources Advocacy Program and former three-term president, LWV Florida.

As was noted above, Deirdre Macnab is focused on solar energy and determined to make our 'Sunshine State' a leader in solar energy "one rooftop at a time."

Among the many awards she has received, Florida Audubon recognized her as their 2015 Woman Conservationist of the Year. Under Deirdre's leadership, the Florida League has become one of the largest in the USA and is recognized as one of Florida's most effective advocacy groups. Highlights of her League



career also includes:

- Bringing prominent Republicans and Democrats to the state board, including former senators Paula Dockery and Alex Villalobos and U.S. Congresswoman Pat Schroeder.
- Striking down a 48-hour turnaround on voter registration in the courts.
- Defeating 9 amendments to the Constitution, including TABOR (taxpayer bill of rights).
- Leading the charge for a successful election reform bill which restored two weeks of early voting and the Sunday before election day.
- Establishing the League's role in being the largest volunteer petition gatherer and coalition partner in the Land and Legacy Amendment

**WHEN:** Thursday, April 21, 2016. 11:30 registration, 12 noon luncheon, 12:30 program.

**WHERE:** Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Drive, Sanibel

**COST:** \$25 per person.

**RSVP:** [Click here](#) on or before April 18th to send an email to Ellen Strobel to reserve your place. Or mail your check with the names of all attendees to LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957.

You can also reserve your place now and pay at the door. Because LWV Sanibel is required to pay for each reserved meal, unpaid and absent reservations will be billed.

## **LWV Florida's Successful Year**

During the 2016 Florida Legislative session, the LWV Florida tracked more than 100 bills in five legislative priorities and was quite successful in advancing those objectives. With pressure from the LWV, several very bad bills were



killed, including

- Open Carry and Campus Carry.
- Fracking in Florida.
- A constitutional amendment promoting privatization and growth of charter schools.



And >>> **DRUM ROLL**<<<, thanks to the legal challenges by the League, Common Cause, and National Council of La Raza, the Legislature was forced to accept redrawn congressional and state senate districts to comply with the new laws under Amendments 5 and 6 which passed in 2010 by 63% of the voters. Due to the redrawn districts, **all** 40 Florida Senate and **all** 120 House seats in the Florida Legislature and **all** 27 seats of the Florida delegation to the US House of Representatives are up for election in November 2016! **The 2016 November election is a milestone and significant election for Florida.**



[Click Here](#) and Be Ready to VOTE!

## **Clerk of Court Addresses League of Women Voters** **By Barbara Joy Cooley**

Linda Doggett, Lee County Clerk of Circuit Court and Comptroller, spoke at the League of Women Voters - Sanibel luncheon on March 17 at the Sundial Resort on Sanibel.

Linda, who is a native Floridian, is a proponent of openness in government. She described her duties as Clerk and her office's commitment to making county documents easily accessible. She is also currently serving on the Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice, which was established to determine how to better provide legal representation for people. If created, the Clerks of Court throughout the state will be able to direct people who need such services to



them.

Linda explained that her office, in addition to being responsible for protecting records and making them accessible, must audit the various county departments. One audit recently turned up some operational problems.

The Clerk's office is also the CFO for the county, and invests funds for the county. This responsibility includes creating financial statements that are used when determining bond ratings for the county.

The Clerk's court-related duties are the most complex, according to Linda. She recommends conducting a search of court records - both civil and criminal -- when choosing a doctor, roofer, house cleaner, etc. A new system being installed at the Clerk's office will make court-related documents more readily available on the [www.leeclerk.org](http://www.leeclerk.org) web site.

For her public service and use of technology, Linda was recognized by the News-Press as the 2015 Public Official of the Year. She has saved taxpayers about a million dollars by shifting to electronic records.



## **LWV Sanibel Annual Meeting**

**Thursday, April 21, 2016**

**Immediately following the Luncheon Program.**

### **Meeting AGENDA**

Welcome  
Adoption of Rules  
President's Report  
Adoption of 2015 Annual Meeting Minutes  
Treasurer's Report  
Adoption of Budget



Election of New Officers, Directors, and Nominating Committee  
Adoption of 2016-2017 Program  
Old Business  
New Business  
Adjournment

\*\*\*\*\*

Slate of Officers and Directors\* to be considered:

Robyn Cook -- President  
Barbara Joy Cooley -- Vice President and Communications  
Ellen Strobel -- Treasurer  
Ellen O'Neill -- Secretary  
Rosemary Powell -- Director (second year of two-year term)  
Judith Jones -- Director (second year of two-year term)  
Martha Siders -- Director (two year term)  
Robin Krivanek -- Director (two year term); membership

2016-2017 Nominating Committee:  
Robin Krivanek (Chair), Maree Elowson

Proposed Programs for 2016-2017 and event organizer:  
November -- Post-Election Wrap up (Robyn Cook)  
January -- The Health of Health Care System (Robin Krivanek)  
February -- Managing Freshwater (Barbara Cooley)  
March -- Creating Local Community Involvement (Carolyn Gray)  
April -- LWV Sanibel Annual Meeting

\*We welcome interest from anyone who might want to join the Board in either an official capacity, as an additional director, or in an unofficial capacity attending Board meetings.

### **Notes from the Open Government and You: A Public Forum By Robin Krivanek**

The Forum was hosted at the News-Press Offices on March 12, 2016. The keynote Speaker was Barbara Petersen, President of the Florida nonprofit First Amendment Foundation. The Foundation publishes 'Government in the Sunshine Manual' in collaboration with the Florida Attorney General's Office, and provides online training programs in 'sunshine' laws with the Pointer Institute. The Foundation also files amicus briefs pro bono and works with legislators proposing exemptions.



The right to know is a core principle of democratic government and accountability depends on access. In 2002 there were 250 exemptions to the Sunshine laws, whereas, there are 1106 in 2016. In this year's legislative session, of the proposed 74 new or reenacted exemptions to the Sunshine Law just 11 were passed. Petersen noted that the electronic records act passed in 1995 has not been updated since. Florida has the best 'Sunshine' laws but there is little enforcement except through the courts. Last year \$1.3 million was spent defending the governor and cabinet on 'open government' cases that they lost.

Petersen stated we have rights without reasonable remedies and urged consideration of comprehensive reform.

The keynote address was followed by several panel discussions.

**Shutting the Door on Open Government**, lead by Gina Edwards (a reporter who sued the Collier County Clerk of Court over high fees and won on appeal). Edwards noted that a bill in this session of the legislature proposed changing from 'shall' to 'will' regarding the compensation for a winner of a suit over the 'sunshine laws,' which would have made it more difficult for the public to challenge government. "We need an enforcement mechanism besides going to court." Edwards also commented that citizens are treated much more poorly than the press when demanding access.

Mark Caramanica, an attorney, said, "Large print gives the rights, small print takes them away." Poorly worded exemptions lead to overly broad interpretation of the law. An example of this is the outcome of the killing of trainer at SeaWorld that led to exempting all photographs of killings in the media, which now applies to all accidents and to police. Security systems of public agencies were also exempted so no surveillance videos are available. This year, access to surveillance videos was changed to allow access with a showing of due cause.

Michael Barfield, Vice President, ACLU-FL, reiterated that denial of attorney's fees would stop citizen cases. "Privacy rights take a back seat to public need." Barfield cited two examples of exemptions where legislators passed self-serving exemptions. LPRs (license plate readers) were exempted ten days after one in a traffic violation caught a legislator and email addresses collected by the supervisor of elections were exempted because a senator saw it as a possible conflict with his mail order business.

During questions, Barbara Petersen said, "the standard for creating an exemption should be: Is there a public need and is the bill drafted properly?"

Petersen noted the Florida Sunshine Coalition of which LWV Florida is a member.

**An Informed Media = An Informed Community**, lead by Cindy McCurry Ross, Executive Editor, The News-Press. McCurry Ross reviewed the areas of her paper that attempted to connect the public with what's going on. She cited several recent cases of investigative reporting, including: County Commissioner Kiker not reporting lobbyist contacts, who bankroll the candidates, hospital patient overload (Lee Memorial is run by public board, a reporter is at every board meeting), Lee County's very high suicide rate (report found very poor and very expensive mental health services). McCurry Ross also listed several problems facing reporters doing investigative work, including fear, defensiveness, blatant obstructionism, ignorance, elitism, random or excessive redaction, excessive expense and PIO (public information officer) bottlenecks.

Amy Tardif, News Director, FGCU-FM, noted that her reporting group is limited by being a three-member team. Tardif cited a school board PIO who was obstructionist such that she had to go to State Board of Education to get the information she required.

Katie Cribbs, Executive Producer, WINK-TV, pointed out that public record requests are often negotiated and questioned whether email requests for records that were returned by phone were deliberate efforts to avoid creating a record. Often a slow response to a records request resulted in the story becoming 'old,' so not publishable. Cribbs also mentioned that much information is available free online.

**When You Don't Know - The Impact of Sunshine Laws**, lead by Ken Weiss, attorney. Weiss explained that litigation as an enforcement mechanism, but it is expensive. He pointed out that transcripts are available after executive sessions (called 'shade' meetings because they are out of the sunshine). Weiss also mentioned that government in the sunshine consists of two different areas -- the laws relating to meetings and the laws relating to public records.

Katy Arrington, a councilwoman in the newly created Villages of Estero, explained how new council members were trained in the sunshine laws. Finally, Wayne Daltry, local activist, reviewed his experience with the sunshine laws.





## 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](mailto: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

Local Government

Fundraising

Health Care

Sustainability/Natural Resources

Publicity

Membership

Hot Topics

Education

Hospitality/Events

## LWV Sanibel Board Meetings 2015-2016

Members are invited to attend all Board meetings which are held at 3:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month at the Sanibel-Captiva Community Bank, 2475 Library Way. The last Board meeting of the season will be on 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.*

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

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [lwvsanibel@gmail.com](mailto:lwvsanibel@gmail.com) in collaboration with

**Constant Contact** 

Try it free today