Message from Robin Krivanek, LWV Sanibel President

Greetings, Leaguers:

This is ACTION TIME! December is the last month to secure petitions in support of the SolarChoice constitutional amendment. Last week we mailed in 51 completed forms. We've got to get more. If you can volunteer by staffing a table at Bailey's, canvassing your neighborhood, your tennis team, your book group or any other group, please call Robin (395-0927) or Dick (395-1751) for supplies, etc., or click here to download petition forms from the organization's website.

On December 13th before our annual Holiday gathering, we are following up on our November meeting topic, the influence of money in elections. The documentary, "Pay to Play" by John Wellington Ennis, the son of Richard and Sally Ennis of Sanibel, will be shown at 4:00 p.m. during the hour preceding the League's Holiday Party (see below for more details). We thank member Ann Rodman for bringing this fine film to our attention.

And a reminder: Please do not tune out during this busy holiday season. The state legislature is once more gathering for the next session, beginning in early...
state legislature is, even now, preparing for the next session beginning in early January. Our voices need to be heard and, in addition, we need to prepare ourselves to help register voters before the March 15th Presidential Preference Primary. Carolyn Gray, our Voter Services chair, says training is quick and easy...and appreciated.

Happy holidays to all you concerned citizens and see the article below to make your reservation now for December 13th.

'Tis the Season!

LWV Sanibel Holiday Party

No matter what your traditions are this time of year, come and share in the celebration of our LWV commitment to making democracy work.

Sunday, December 13, 2015
5 to 7 p.m.

Hosted by Martha and Rick Siders

Gather over wine and appetizers in fellowship with your League friends to celebrate the holidays and support the LWV Sanibel Education Fund that, among other things, provides the Voter Guides distributed to every Sanibel and Captiva household before national and state elections.
Book your place!  Click here to email Ellen Strobel or call her at 239/395-2969. Please RSVP by December 10. Also, please let Ellen know if you are coming to both the viewing of the "Pay 2 Play" documentary (see below) AND the Holiday party OR just one or the other.

Where:
The Clubhouse at Gulfside Place, 1605 Middle Gulf Dr, Sanibel.

When:
Sunday, December 13, 2015, 5 - 7 p.m.

Reservations and Cost:
Click here to email Ellen Strobel, with your reservation. Cost is $25 per person (not tax deductible). Or pay a fully tax deductible $100 per person to support the LWV Sanibel Education fund. You can pay at the door or send your check to LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957.

Viewing and discussion of an important documentary about the influence of Big Money in American politics*

Sunday, Dec. 13, 4 p.m. (before the LWV Sanibel Holiday Party)

Pay to Play: Democracy's High Stakes
By John Wellington Ennis

The cost of running for office makes candidates beg, borrow, and steal. And when they get into office they are beholden to their big monied donors instead of the voters. When the Supreme Court ruled to allow unlimited corporate...
Court ruled to allow unlimited corporate campaign spending - the stakes got higher. It's time to change the game"! Click Here for the documentary's website.

John Wellington Ennis is a filmmaker, activist, and father. His previous films are: *Free for All!: One Dude's Quest to Save Democracy* and the Upright Citizen's Brigade's *Wild Girls Gone*, starring Amy Poehler. Ennis has written for *The Huffington Post, The Onion* and *Melrose & Fairfax*. He is co-founder of Video the Vote, a citizen journalism project covering election problems, and is on the board of the Public Interest Pictures. He attended the film schools at New York University and the University of Southern California. He has taught documentary filmmaking at UCLA Extension. Rothco Press has recently released his book about street art in Los Angeles, *Where Else but the Streets: A Street Art Dossier*. John is the son of Richard and Sally Ennis of Sanibel.

*For examples, see Mary La Velle's article below about Ray Judah's 19 November talk to the LWV Sanibel.

When:  Sunday, December 13, at 4 p.m., before the LWV Sanibel Holiday Party (from 5 to 7 p.m.).

Where:  The Clubhouse at Gulfside Place, 1605 Middle Gulf Dr., Sanibel.

Cost:  FREE!

RSVP:  So that we will have adequate seating, please Click here to RSVP for this special documentary viewing.

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**U.S. Sugar's Influence on Florida Politics**

By Mary LaVelle

It was a bitter pill for Ray Judah, LWV
Sanibel's luncheon speaker on Thursday, November 19. After being targeted by sugar-related PACs in his reelection campaign for Lee County Commissioner (he had served 22 years and was a known environmentalist), he has turned his loss into a quest to "follow the money" as it influences Florida politics. The paper trail is made more difficult to follow due to the 2010 Citizens United decision by the U.S. Supreme Court, which corporations and special interests have taken full advantage of to influence governmental decisions. Judah's present gig is as coordinator of the Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition. Look it up on the web: flcoastalandocean.org.

Sugar itself is supported by the United States Department of Agriculture to the tune of about $2 BILLION each year. The cost of home-grown sugar is about 2 ½ times higher than sugar on the world market, giving growers a healthy amount of profit to turn into influence on all levels of government, including local.

One conduit for sugar dollars is the PAC called Florida First. Judah knows firsthand the power of the group, which spent $750,000 to attack him during his last campaign. Florida First also gleans major contributions from a think tank called Florida Forward (an aggregation of PACs) as well as the Florida Chamber of Commerce. Florida First spent well over half a million dollars on local elections from 2010 to 2012-only $1000 of it was raised in Lee County.

Another conduit of money/influence is the Florida Committee for Conservative Leadership. One large ($160,000) contributor to that committee is Southern Gardens Citrus, a subsidiary of US Sugar.

Other not so far-flung PACs include the Florida Future Alliance, set up to oppose candidates, which contributes to the Florida Patriots Fund. Stirring the pot also is the PAC Families for Freedom and Fairness, which has raised $20,000 from sugar, tobacco and gaming interests (none from Lee county) to support single member districts in Lee County elections. Ramifications of that proposed change can be the subject of an entire League study!
Another wonderfully named PAC we may already be familiar with is *Americans for Prosperity*, funded by the Koch Brothers and energy money. Until 2017, we will not know the supporters of *Conservative Solutions Project*, which supports Marco Rubio's quest for the presidency.

Last season SCCF's Rae Ann Wessel talked with LWV about water quality in the Caloosahatchee. This season's update includes action on the C43 Reservoir, an issue deserving its own extensive review. Judah pointed out that though the concrete structure will hold water, there is no water quality component to it, nor recreational; stagnant and warm, it may well be a perfect breeding place for blue-green algae, becoming a wildlife-dead zone.

No presentation to LWV should end without at least a sliver of hope. Judah's was the hope that the lawsuit filed against the Florida State Legislature--to force it to comply with Amendment 1 and actually spend designated funds on natural resources--would be successful and ultimately result in real Everglades and Caloosahatchee restoration.

There are 1,900 registered lobbyists in Florida. Only a few of them are ours. Still, we keep on working.

**LVW Sanibel Voter Registration Drives**

**Voter Registration is a critical mission of the LWV.**

It is time once again to begin our Sanibel Voter Registration (VR) Drive. Everyone who wishes to register voters must take the LWV Florida Quiz, which contains ten questions. [CLICK HERE](#) to go to the LWV Florida website with voter registration information and the quiz. In the website, first follow Step 1, "'How To' Guide" to review VR requirements. Second, go to Step 2 and click on the link to take the mandatory quiz in order to serve as an LWV VR Volunteer. We encourage you to also take a moment to click on Step 3 which provides an example of a completed Florida Voter Registration form. The entire process should not take more than 20 minutes.

Contrary to the information in Step 1, the LWV Sanibel will provide all the materials you need for a Voter Registration event, including VR forms, pens, sign-up forms, etc.
Dates for the LWV Sanibel Voter Registration are: **December 12 and December 19** at Bailey's from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.; please sign up for a 2-hour shift (10 to noon, or noon to 2). And on **January 10, 2016** at the Sanibel Farmers' Market from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. (we can accommodate two 3-hour shifts, 8-11, 11 to 1 p.m.

We urge **YOU to VOLUNTEER** -- it is an enjoyable experience and essential for the work of the LWV. We must have two registrants at all times. We encourage you to review the VR materials and take the quiz, then sign up for a time slot to work at our VR tables.

[Click here](#) to email LWV Sanibel Vice President and Voter Services Chair, Carolyn Gray, with your questions and to volunteer for one or more of the VR time slots.

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**LWV Sanibel**

**2015-16 Programs**

All luncheons and programs take place at the Sundial Beach Resort (Waterview Room), 1451 Middle Gulf Drive. Registration begins at 11:30 a.m., with the lunch and program following from Noon to 2:00 p.m.
December 13 2015. Documentary viewing, "Pay to Play: Democracy's High Stakes," 4:00 p.m. Gulfside Place Clubhouse, 1605 Middle Gulf Drive.

December 13, 2015 Holiday Party, 5-7 pm
Gulfside Place Clubhouse, 1605 Middle Gulf Drive

January 21, 2016
Protecting the Franchise: The State of Voters' Rights
Speaker, Laura C. Weir, Ph.D. (Political Science);
Executive Director, Center for International Education,
Florida SouthWestern State College, Edison campus

February 18, 2016
Defending the Environment: A Bi-partisan Approach
Speaker, Aliki Moncrief, Executive Director,
Florida Conservation Voters

March 17, 2016
Justice for All?
Speaker, Hon. Linda Doggett, Lee County Clerk of Circuit Court;
member, Florida Commission on Access to Civil Justice

April 21, 2016
TBA Program and LWV Sanibel Annual Meeting

Lunch meals are $25 per person. To reserve your place, Click here to 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. Deadline to reserve is the Monday of the week of the Thursday luncheon/program. Because LWV Sanibel is required to pay for each meal, unpaid and absent reservations will be billed.
It Is Time to Renew Your Membership

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.

There will be five scheduled luncheons this season at $25/lunch. Please note on your check that it includes membership and the luncheon reservation.

Please make your check to the 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.

2015-2016 LWV Sanibel Officers and Directors

President                    Robin Krivanek
Vice President             Carolyn Gray
Treasurer                    Ellen Strobel
Secretary                    Robyn Cook
Director (2 yr term)     Ellen O'Neill
Director (2 yr term)     Judith Jones
Director (2 yr term)     Rosemary Powell
Continuing Director      Maree Elowson

2015-16 Nominating Committee
Linda Kramer (Chair), Barbara Cooley, Martha Siders
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

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 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 Bank of the Islands. Board Meeting dates for 2015-16 are December 9, 2015 and in 2016, January 13, February 10, March 9, and 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.