Greetings from LWV Sanibel President, Linda Kramer

Our Sanibel League of Women Voters is having a dynamic year!

- Our first three luncheons (Health Care Reform, Florida and the Voting Wars, and the most recent, Stand Your Ground: Legislation and Consequences) were well attended and resulted in lively discussions among the speakers and with the audience. Ellen O’Neill has planned yet another informative and sure-to-be-controversial luncheon-on March 25, on Immigration Reform. When we said "Hot Button Issues" we meant it.

- Our annual meeting, scheduled for April 8, will feature Holly Milbrandt from the City of Sanibel's Natural Resources Department. At that meeting we will also elect an excellent new Board of Directors. Our nominating committee has formed a fine slate for 2014-2015; their report follows.

- One of our goals this year was to increase the number of active members. Many of you have responded admirably. Dick Calkins now has a number of members who help with voter service, including voter registration. Mary LaVelle has agreed to assist Maree Elowson in communications.

- Watch for our notices from our Voter Services Chair, Dick Calkins, about a Candidates Forum evening on Thursday, April 3, 2014. There will be a primary election on Tuesday, April 22nd, to fill the seat left vacant by Congressman Trey Radel who resigned his post in late January 2014.
What You Will Find In This Issue

1. Greetings from LWV Sanibel President Linda Kramer.
2. March 25, Luncheon and Program on Immigration Reform.
3. April 3, Candidates' Forum for vacant Congressional seat.
4. April 8, LWV Sanibel Luncheon & Program on Sanibel Water Quality, and LWV Annual Meeting.
6. April 9 - 11, LWV Florida Legislative Summit and Council of Leaders Meeting.
9. "Stand Your Ground" Law Discussed at February LWV Program.
10. Membership Application.
11. Current LWV Sanibel Officers and Board Members.

Final Hot Topics LWV Sanibel Program
Don't Miss our March 25 Program! RSVP Now.

"Immigration Reform: What We Need to Know"
Attorney Elizabeth C. Pines

Elizabeth C. Pines has been practicing immigration law for nearly 20 years and is the founding partner of
Elizabeth C. Pines, P.A., a boutique law firm dedicated to helping foreign nationals with immigration matters in the U.S.

Pines sits on the board of the League of Women Voters of Florida and LWV of Miami-Dade County. She chairs the League of Women Voters of Florida Immigration Committee and is part of the Fair Districts Committee.

Ms. Pines received her Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Miami in 1985 and earned an M.B.A.
She received her Juris Doctor degree from St. Thomas University School of Law in 1994.

Where: Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Drive, Sanibel

When: Tuesday, March 25
   Registration - 11:30 a.m.
   Luncheon and program - 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Cost: If you paid $80 for all four LWV luncheon programs (20 November, 14 January, 18 February, and 25 March), we have reserved your place. Otherwise, the cost is $25 per person for this luncheon and program. Please make your check payable to LWV Sanibel and note the program date and number in your party on the memo line. Mail checks to LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957.

RSVP: Click Here to email Ellen O’Neill and reserve your place. Please provide the names of the people in your party. Reservation deadline is March 21.

LWV SANIBEL PLANS TO HOST MEET AND GREET WITH CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATES ON APRIL 3.

Because of the resignation of former Congressman Trey Radel, a special election to fill his place as the Representative from Congressional District 19 must be held. The primary election will take place on April 22, 2014. The general election will be held on June 24, 2014.

The League of Women Voters of Sanibel has invited all qualified candidates for the post to attend a "Meet and Greet" on Wednesday, April 3 at 7 pm in the Sanibel Community House, 2173 Periwinkle Way. Candidates will have time to make a short presentation, and then be available to meet the public and answer individual questions.

No signs or demonstrations will be allowed in the auditorium.
Once commitments have been made by candidates, a list of those attending will be posted on the League website.

**PRIMARY VOTING**

In order to vote in a primary, voters must be registered as a member of a party.

In this election, one candidate each for the Democratic Party and the Libertarian Party have been qualified, so there will be no primary for either candidate. Four Republicans are vying in their primary on April 22 for the ability to run in the general election in June.

Voters who wish to change their party registration must contact the Lee County Supervisor of Elections, Sharon L. Harrington, for an application. Call 239-533-8683, write that office at Constitutional Complex, PO Box 2545, Fort Myers Fl, 33902, or pick up an application in person at the office, 2480 Thompson St. in Fort Myers. Applications must be filed 30 days before an election to be valid for that election.

**Absentee Ballots** for upcoming elections may also be obtained in those same ways.

For more information, please contact Voter Service Chair Dick Calkins at 239-395-1751.

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**LWV Sanibel Luncheon, Program and Annual Meeting**

**Program:** Sanibel H2O Matters: A Look Back at the Summer of 2013.

**Where:** Sundial Beach Resort, 1451 Middle Gulf Drive,

**When:** Tuesday, April 8, 2014
  *Registration - 11:30 a.m.*
  *Luncheon and program - 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.*

**Cost:** The cost is $25 per person for this luncheon and program. Please make your check payable to LWV Sanibel and note the program date and number in your party on the memo line. Mail checks to LWV Sanibel, P.O. Box 1194, Sanibel, FL 33957.

**RSVP:** Click here to reserve your place with an email to LWV Sanibel Program Chair, Ellen O'Neill
Special Presentation: Sanibel H2O Matters: A Look Back at the Summer of 2013.

By Holly Milbrandt,
Environmental Biologist,
City of Sanibel, Dept. of Natural Resources

Franklin Lock, Caloosahatchee River, Olga, Florida

Ms. Milbrandt will provide an overview of water management in South Florida, with a specific focus on Lake Okeechobee and the Caloosahatchee River. It will detail the conditions from the summer of 2013 that led to four months of massive freshwater releases, the impacts of the releases on Sanibel/Captiva ecology and economy, the City’s response, and the outlook for the upcoming rainy season.

Holly Milbrandt is the Environmental Biologist for the Natural Resources Department at the City of Sanibel. She began working for the City in 2006, following three years as the Education Director for the Tarpon Bay Explorers concession at "Ding" Darling. She is also currently serving as the Acting Natural Resources Department Director, while Director James Evans is on special assignment regarding water quality issues. Holly has a B.S degree in Biology from Furman University in Greenville, SC and a Masters' degree in Marine Biology from the University of Charleston, SC. Her masters' thesis investigated the effects of pesticide runoff from the Dade County Agricultural Area on microbial communities of adjacent canals and Florida Bay. Although not a true "native", Holly grew up in Sarasota, FL and enjoyed her first of many annual family vacations to Sanibel in 1978.

LWV Sanibel Nominating Committee Announces 2014-15 Slate of Officers & Board Members

President: Robin Krivanek
Vice President: Dick Calkins
Secretary: Martha Wolf
Treasurer: Carolyn Gray

Returning Directors: Maree Flowson
Directors:              Maree Elowson
Ellen O'Neill
Maddy Mayor

New Directors:       Enid Packard
Ellen Strobel

Linda Robison agreed to provide "counsel" regarding interpretation of bylaws and current legal requirements for maintaining our status as a not-for-profit.

LWV Florida Legislative Summit & Council of Leaders
April 9 – 11, Tallahassee Florida

This Florida Legislative Session is bound to be a busy one, and with issues like healthcare, environmental protection, education, and elections all on the front burner, we cannot afford for our League members to sit this one out! The State of Florida needs YOU!!

Click here for information and registration details.

Right now, LWV Florida is offering a special early-bird price of just $225 for BOTH Summit & Council (or $125 each for Summit OR Council). Sign up by March 9th to take advantage of these discounted prices!

Action Alert: Contact Your Legislators to Block the Expansion of Private School Vouchers

Recently, a massive expansion of Florida's voucher system was filed in the state legislature, a plan that could defund public schools and divert millions of taxpayer dollars to private institutions with little accountability. Legislators need to hear from League supporters now protesting this proposal, and urging them to block the expansion of private school vouchers. For more information, please...
Block the expansion of private school vouchers. For more information, please click here for an article from The Ledger.com.

**Background:**
Earlier this year, Speaker of the House Will Weatherford (R-Wesley Chapel) named the expansion of the private voucher program a top priority of his for the 2014 legislative session. His proposal (PCB FTSC 14-02), allows sales tax revenue to be sent to private scholarship organizations and significantly expands the number of students who would be eligible to receive vouchers under the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program.

The proposed committee bill would also:

- **Increase the program's scholarship cap to $390 million for the 2014-2015 school year, and keep the limit about $30 million above what it otherwise would have been for several years;**
- **Remove a provision that requires middle and high school students to attend a public school for at least one year before qualifying for a voucher; and**
- **Provide tax credits to retailers who send their sales tax revenue to scholarship organizations instead of to the state of Florida.**

The expansion of private scholarship programs under this proposal is a further abdication of the state's responsibility to provide a high quality education to Florida's children. In 2013 alone, $207 million was allocated to private schools via the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program. Private schools who accept students on the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship:

- Do not participate in FCAT
- Are not required to publicly report school grades or FCAT scores
- Are not required to have certified teachers
- Are not required to utilize the state curriculum standards.

Please contact your state Senator and Representative and urge them to vote against this proposal, which will divert millions in taxpayer dollars to private school vouchers. Our elected officials should be focusing on improving our public schools, not on expanding an alternate education system with minimal accountability.

**Please ask your legislators to oppose PCB FTSC 14-02!** To find the contact information for your state Senator and state Representative, please CLICK HERE.

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Support the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014
By Elisabeth MacNamara, National LWV President

Ninety-four years ago on February 14, 1920, pioneering...
Ninety-four years ago on February 14, 1920, pioneering suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters to secure the right to vote for women. Within just a few months, Congress would grant American women the vote after decades of advocacy.

But that did not complete the League's work - and our work is still not done today. Barriers to the ballot box might look different today, but threats to our democracy remain. Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision which gutted a key component of the monumental Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, but last month members of Congress introduced legislation to update the VRA through common sense solutions.

Tell Congress you support the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014.

This bipartisan legislation was carefully crafted to protect the rights of all voters from discrimination and repair the damage to the VRA inflicted by the Supreme Court's decision. The updated legislation seeks to better protect all voters against discrimination and ensure Americans are guaranteed their right to vote.

The modernized VRA will ensure that equal access to the ballot box is about fairness and equality - something that Carrie Chapman Catt knew when she founded the League of Women Voters. Tell Congress that the Voting Rights Amendment Act needs to be restored this year.

Nearly 100 years after the League was founded, we continue to hold fast to the belief that our nation is at its strongest when the voices of all voters are heard. "There will never be a true democracy until every responsible...adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own...voice in government," said Chapman Catt. The Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 is a critical step to ensure just that.

The League refuses to remain silent as voters across the country face grave barriers to the vote. Urge your elected officials to support this
grave barriers to the vote. Urge your elected officials to support this important legislation and encourage them to act swiftly to move toward final passage.

Thank you for Making Democracy Work.

Lee County Sheriff Mike Scott Speaks at February LWV Program
By Mary E. La Velle

Right smack in the wake of the Michael Dunn trial, our February topic of "Stand Your Ground" was truly a hot topic---something that our terrific program chair Ellen O'Neill might not have anticipated when she scheduled our speaker, Lee County Sheriff Mike Scott. She did know that the Travon Martin case has not gone away.

Scott is a passionate advocate of that law, and of arming citizens in general. He told us that when we are about to become the victim of a violent crime, law enforcement will not be on the spot to protect us; we will be the "first responders." Gun ownership and standing one's ground is thus, in his eyes, a black and white issue, with little room for nuance.

As you might imagine, not everyone in the audience agreed or was convinced. The discussion was lively but civilized, as befits a League event.

At the end, three things were agreed upon by all, including the Sheriff: first, Ellen is a charming and classy woman; next, Mike Scott is personable and charming himself; and lastly, the millions of guns washing around in America are probably here to stay, however much that fact is bemoaned or celebrated in our society.
Interesting fact: because the number of applications for concealed carry permits in Florida has apparently gone through the roof, there is a proposal to expedite permits by routing them to local County tax collectors instead of through officials at the state level.

Interesting question: is the gun advocate's emphasis on protecting oneself a realistic assessment of facts on the ground, or is it simply creating fear?

Interesting observation: so far as we could tell, the Sheriff was the only one packing heat at the lunch.

Membership Application

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 2013-14 Board

Linda Kramer, President
Linda Robison, Vice President
Jim LaVelle, Treasurer
Robert Winters, Secretary
Maddy Mayor, Membership
Dick Calkins, Voter Services
Carla Benninga, Founding President
Maree Elowson, The Voter Newsletter Editor
Ellen O'Neill, Programs
Carolyn Gray, Director
Martha Wolf, Director

LWV Sanibel Board Meetings 2013-2014

Members are invited to attend all Board meetings which are held at 3:30 p.m. at the Bank of the Islands from October through May. With some exceptions, meetings are on the second Wednesdays of the month. The remaining Board meetings for this season are: March 12, April 9, and May 14.

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.