



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

The VoteR

League of Women Voters of Sedona-Verde Valley

www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org

P. O. Box 966 Sedona, AZ 86339

March 2010

President's Letter - Upcoming Events

I want to remind everyone that the League, in cooperation with the WaterWise Alliance, is hosting a kick-off breakfast to celebrate Water Awareness Month. It will be Wednesday, March 31, at the Old Sedona Bar & Grill, from 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. Please respond by March 22 to Fran Levensgood, I hope you will be able to attend. We have two excellent speakers, Tom O'Halleran and Barbara Litrell. The breakfast will be honoring deceased League member, Dorothy Hores.

On Saturday, May 1, we will be having our Annual Meeting at The Manzanita Restaurant in Cornville. It begins with registration at 9:00 a.m., followed by breakfast, a speaker and our traditional annual business meeting. There will be reports on the past year's activities, and the membership will vote on a new budget, adopt program items for the upcoming year, and elect new board members. Please let Donna Pratt know as soon as possible if you plan to attend. Also let Donna or Fran know if you can help.

Board of Directors Meeting: The next board meeting will take place at the Sedona Shadows Clubhouse on Friday, April 9th, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. All members are invited to attend our board meetings; there is an open forum at the beginning for those who would like to address the board. Friends of the league and anyone interested in learning more about us are welcome.

Member Information

Congratulations! -- and best wishes to former Board members Mike Ward and Barbara Litrell, both of whom were successful in their candidacies for the Sedona City Council.

And thank you to Ellie Bauer for putting herself forward for the Clarkdale Town Council. Ellie is one of our most active members, contributing in many ways to our community.

We now have 53 paid-up members, which is a drop from previous years; we'd like every member to be a recruiter and help us build up our numbers. Donna Pratt (282-6428) is our Membership Chair and would be thrilled to help if you know of anyone who might like to join us.

Changes to Member Handbook

Kathy Davis' new e-mail address is kdavis1247@gmail.com

Welcome New Members

Joan C. Scott,

Gene and Glenda Hill are League members who recently moved to Williams from Sioux Falls, Idaho. They attended the Anniversary Luncheon/Town Hall meeting and we hope to see them again soon. They can be contacted at

Another Board Resignation: We regret that, after many years of service, Rita Livingston has decided that she no longer has time to serve on the board. Her vast community connections have been of great value to our organization and we will miss her at board meetings

Board Nominations Needed: The attrition of our board this year – in particular the early loss of two members who ran for public office – has been a blow to our ability to cover all of the activities we had planned for this year. If you or anyone you know would be willing to be a candidate for next year's LWVSVV Board, please contact Judy Miller, Donna Pratt, or Kathy Heidepriem. Recently the board adopted a new operating policy that will limit all of our events and meetings – except for Voter Service forums – to the months of September through early May. So – snowbirds have no excuse! Please step up and help this year. Thank you.

Voter Service: Candidate and Issue Forums

We held candidate forums for the spring municipal elections in Jerome, Clarkdale and Sedona; participation by the public and by the candidates at all three was good. We thank our moderators and forum helpers for being there and making sure that things ran smoothly. A special forum on Sedona's ballot issue concerning direct election of the mayor was pulled together at the last minute. Thank you to Susan Barrington at the Sedona Community Center for accommodating us and to Sandra Goodwin from the Central Yavapai League for serving as moderator. Former Sedona Mayor Anita MacFarlane and former vice-mayor Ernie Strauch served as spokespersons for each side of the issue.

The town of Jerome will be having a runoff election on May 18th. On that same day, the State will be holding a Special Election on a proposal to increase the statewide sales tax to address the ongoing severe budget difficulties that our state is experiencing. Fall Primaries are Tuesday, August 24th; the general election will be Tuesday, November 2nd.

League 90th Anniversary Luncheon and Arizona Town Hall Program

This year's birthday luncheon was an innovative collaboration between our League and the Arizona Town Hall. It worked well for both organizations because there was a good turnout for our lunch and Town Hall had a large audience for its "Community Outreach" presentation. Furthermore, our silent auction – organized by Mary Gassaway, Fran Levensgood, and Liz Danbury – was a big success and helped us with our balance sheet.

The subject of the Town Hall presentation was "Riding the Fiscal Roller Coaster: Government Revenue in Arizona." Speakers included the mayors of Sedona, Chino Valley, Cottonwood, and Prescott Valley; former Sedona vice mayor Ernie Strauch; and Arizona Town Hall President Tara Jackson. Somehow it was possible to condense the causes, the depth and complexity of Arizona's fiscal crisis into understandable facts that the audience could comment on. Details on the Town Hall study can be found at www.aztownhall.org.

Membership Meeting on Program Planning

Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer spoke about the League's program planning process at our January membership meeting. The first task was to come up with an issue to send forward to the national League to consider as a priority subject for study and action over the two-year period beginning in July. Leagues all over the country were doing the same thing. Selected national program items will be voted upon at the LWVUS convention in June. Our second task was to identify some issues of local interest to submit to our membership at the annual meeting.

Robyn explained that issues selected for national study have to be those that need to be dealt with at the federal level of government, mainly the U.S. Congress. After some discussion, we decided that we would like the national league to ***“reaffirm our positions on campaign finance and election reform. We would like to see continued action priority for these positions.”*** The need to go back and do this, of course, is because of the recent Supreme Court decision in “Citizens United v. FEC”. This ruling allows corporations and unions to make unlimited independent expenditures in candidate elections. The League is already pushing for Congress to, at a minimum, update campaign finance laws, and especially disclosure requirements, governing corporate and union spending. This needs to be done prior to the fall elections if possible. The nature of the Court's ruling and its impact will make the issue a priority for the long term as well. (LWVUS President Mary G. Wilson testified in Congress about this ruling in February; the text is at www.lwv.org under News and Events/Speeches and Testimony. It is well worth reading by all League members. **This is important!**)

In developing our local program, we look for issues that are of wide interest to our membership, significant to the Sedona-Verde Valley region, and potential subjects of local government action. It's important that there be members willing to work on the selected issues, and we should have reason to believe that our work will have some impact – either educational or through advocacy. One goal is to enhance the League's visibility and influence in local public affairs.

League members Paul Chevalier and Angela LeFevre made our gathering more exciting than usual because they came in with specific requests for the League to consider taking action on two issues of local interest.

Paul wanted the League to take a position on Sedona's Proposition 400, which would have repealed direct election of the city's mayor beginning in 2012. Robyn walked us through the reason why our local league cannot take sides on that issue: we have never studied the topic or reached member consensus. She pointed out that there is some similarity to a national position that we have – the League does favor the direct election of the President, and many of the reasons for that could apply to the popular election of local officials. But that is not sufficient when the question is so local and so specific. That does not mean that the League can do nothing. What we can do is to ensure that information, including pros and cons, gets out to the community, and to organize a public forum, if possible. We were happy to be able to do that.

Angela LeFevre's request was that the League join a coalition that has formed to promote the long-debated enactment of legislation designating a Red Rock National Scenic Area in the Red Rock Ranger District that surrounds Sedona. While this is technically a national issue, since it is federal land being discussed and a federal entity that would be lobbied, the League could take a look at how existing League positions might be applied in considering whether to join a coalition on the local level. (Our league did submit a letter on the subject to our congressman a few years ago, but we did not endorse the legislation per se.)

Other subjects that came up were the Cottonwood annexation issue and the State Lands process for annexation; and the need to be involved in regional issues such as annexations, state parks, and land use and to advocate public participation. The Board will be submitting its list of recommended items (and will also inform the membership of items suggested but not recommended) at the annual meeting. The members vote for the adoption of program items.

LWV Arizona President Bonnie Saunder' Report ~

The LWV Arizona Council 2010, an all-day event (including Board Meeting), will be held on May 22nd at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Surprise. There will be another Newsletter in April with all of the details.

The 2010 LWVUS Convention will be held in Atlanta, GA on June 11th-15th. The LWVAZ may send three delegates and each local League may send at least one and perhaps more, based on membership numbers. More information will be sent in a few weeks.

The Board of the LWVUS has just released its highest legislative priorities for the next year: Global Climate Change, Health Care Reform, Campaign Finance Reform. On its watch list of next level priorities are the following: Arms Control, DC Voting Rights, Election Reform, Ethics and Lobbying Reform, and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Over the past few months, the LWVAZ has undertaken a number of projects, which are described below.

- We have given our support to the LWV Colorado and several local Leagues to work toward the appointment of a person to oversee the EPA mission in the Four Corners area.
- We have given our support to Steve Lynn, Chair of the AZ Independent Redistricting Commission, in sending a letter to all unaffiliated voters in the state, letting them know that they are eligible to vote in all primary elections except the Presidential Preference Primary. This letter will include information on how unaffiliated voters in all counties can get information on how to participate in these primaries. This project is too daunting to accomplish right away but when it does happen, we will be involved.
- We have given our support to the LWV Colorado and LWV Boulder in asking the LWV US to support the Fair Elections Now Act in the U.S. Congress. If passed, that law would enable Congressional candidates to run campaigns using a combination of public funding and small donations from supporters. This law could mitigate the Supreme Court decisions, which gave corporations a right to spend unlimited amounts of money for or against candidates for office, even close to the election.
- At the invitation of the Secretary of State, several League members from the Phoenix area have participated in a review of the Election Procedure and Manual. Barbara Klein and I sent a Letter to the Editor of *The Arizona Republic* applauding the Secretary of State for the achievement of this review. This letter was published in January.
- We were not invited to participate in the O'Connor House Project but we sent a letter with some of our suggestions for future changes to Arizona government.
- We extend hearty congratulations to Gini McGirr, LWVAZ Secretary and Legislative Director for her selection as a League trainer.

Census 2010

The U.S. Census happens only once every 10 years - and Census 2010 is fast approaching!



Why is 2010 Census participation so important for your community? **Here's what's at stake:**

- The distribution of \$400 billion in federal funds per year to communities around the country;
- Funding to build infrastructure, such as new hospitals, roads, tunnels, and schools;
- Funding to improve public services, such as emergency services, job-training and senior centers;
- Critical demographic data informing businesses where to invest in local economies;
- Perhaps most importantly, for the next 10 years the Census will help determine how we are represented in Congress, in every state legislature, and in many local legislative bodies.

The 2010 Census is a short form with 10 questions that will take 10 minutes to complete.

We need your help spreading the word that the Census is important, easy, and fair. Will you forward this message to 5 of your neighbors or friends today?

The Census influences public policy decisions, and we all must do our part to see that it is accurate and inclusive. Our goal is to help eliminate any undercount, particularly in low-income and minority populations.

It's too important to miss. Fill out and mail your questionnaire by the April 1, 2010 deadline - and make sure your family and friends know what's at stake.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

LWVSVV Board Members 2009-2010

Francine Levensgood, VOC (Chairperson)

Pat George, Camp Verde

Liz Danbury, Sedona

Mary Gassaway, Clarkdale

Donna Pratt, Sedona

Off-Board: Robyn Prud'homme Bauer
Representative to LWVAZ

Off-Board: Kathy Heidepriem
Newsletter and Website

If you have problems reading this e-newsletter, would prefer to receive a print version, or would like to be unsubscribed, please contact Kathy Heidepriem, The Voter is also available on our website at www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.com

April is Water Awareness Month in Sedona and Arizona!

March 31 8 – 10am	Verde River Basin Partnership with Tom O’Halleran at Old Sedona Bar & Grill – 8-10am – hosted by the League of Women Voters – come for breakfast and to take action to preserve our water resources – \$10
April 2 2pm – 5pm	Local Foods of Arizona – featuring Gardens for Humanity at New Frontiers – FREE
April 7 9 – 10:30am	Bringing Water to Sedona – Past & Present – Paul Thompson and Paul Kaiser will speak about the ditches of Oak Creek Canyon – 9:00 am – Sedona Heritage
April 7 6:30 – 8:30pm	Sustainability, Our Water, Our Food, Our Communities with Guy McPherson , UofA School of Renewable Natural Resources at Sedona Library – mini-expo of water, energy technologies & food – hosted by Sustainable Arizona –
April 10 8:30am - 3pm	KSB Native Plant Workshop – What to Know, What to Grow – Sedona Red Rock High School – lots of great presentations on local plants, gardening secrets,
April 11 1pm – 3pm	Film – “Power Paths” with Andy Bessler – Sedona Library – hosted by the Sierra Club
April 14 6:30pm – 9pm	Managing Our Water in the West featuring a guest panel of experts in regional biology, hydrology, water management and ecology at Sedona Library – mini-expo of
April 17 9am – 1pm	Healthy Living/Healthy Earth – Earth Day Celebration at Posse Grounds – City of
April 17 3pm – 6pm	“Water to Wine” at the Old Town Center for the Arts in Cottonwood – an evening with wonderful Verde Valley Wines, local foods and music from William Eaton & Friends – hosted by the Verde Valley Wine Consortium and Sustainable
April 19 6pm – 8pm	Flicker Shack – Water/Food Film – Sedona Public Library – come see an award-winning
April 21-24 Various	Verde Valley Birding & Nature Festival – Saving Water is NOT Just for the Birds – Dead
April 22 12pm – 6pm	40th Earth Day Celebration at New Frontiers – Organic Foods, Samples, Green Cleaning
April 22 6:30 – 8:30pm	Film – “Earth Days” + Celebration at Old Town Center for the Arts in Cottonwood – come to enjoy the music, talk about our future and see a great film – hosted by
April 29 8 – 10am	Children & Our Water Resources – West Sedona School – City Water Committee

These events are staged by the Sedona WaterWise Alliance, a collaboration of organizations: Sustainable Arizona, Keep Sedona Beautiful, Sedona Public Library, Sedona Women, Old Town Center for the Arts, Verde Valley Wine Consortium, Center for Biological Diversity, Sedona Schools, Verde Valley Birding, League of Women Voters Sedona –Verde Valley, Arizona Water Company, City of Sedona Gardens for Humanity, New Frontiers, Sedona Recycles, Verde Earthworks and others with support from Pink Jeeps and a grant from the Sedona Community Foundation.