

The VoteR

League of Women Voters of Sedona-Verde Valley

www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org

P. O. Box 966 Sedona, AZ 86339

September 2009

President's Letter

In my previous letter, I had stated that I had wanted to increase membership and work on fundraising. As you can see from the information below, we are having our membership meeting in October and a fundraising picnic in November. They will both be open to the public and we will do a press release. However, word of mouth is always the best advertising. If you know anyone who might be interested in joining the League, please extend a personal invitation. With the present economic environment, fundraising will be difficult for many organizations. People who normally give will by necessity be more discriminating. On that note, we would really like to have something that would draw people into both of our events. I would appreciate any ideas that you might have.

Save these dates for Upcoming Events

September 19th and 20th: Voter education and registration at Sedona Community Fair

The League of Women Voters will again be a participant in the Sedona Community Fair. New and exciting activities at the Fair this year will be a Sedona Winefest on Saturday and "Music on the Mesa" jazz performances on Sunday. These are in addition to the traditional classic car show, aircraft displays, local entertainment, history and art exhibits, activities for children, and a large community pavilion with booths hosted by local service clubs, non-profit organizations, and commercial companies. Plus – food and refreshments presented by our local Civil Air Patrol and local restaurants and vendors.

Be sure to stop by the League booth during your visit to the Fair. League members will be available to register voters and answer questions about elections and procedures. We'll also have a number of handouts, and information on the League's 90-year history of working for democracy and good government. The "suffragette lady" will be making an appearance. Don't miss it!

Sedona Airport, 10:00 – 4:00 both days

Sunday, October 11th: Membership Meeting/New Member Orientation

Please make it a point to join us for our fall membership meeting and new member orientation. New and prospective members – and anyone who would like to know more about the League – should plan to attend this meeting. There will be a speaker, refreshments, and a discussion of plans for the upcoming year. Let Donna Pratt or Fran Levengood know if you would be available to help with this meeting.

Sedona Shadows Clubhouse from 3:00 to 5:00 in the afternoon.

Saturday, November 7th: Fundraising picnic

We are hoping to have a much-needed fundraiser early in the League year to help with programs and services. This is in the planning stage and details will be sent to everyone at a later date.

Board of Directors Meeting: The next meeting of the LWVSVV Board of Directors will take place at the Sedona Shadows Clubhouse on Friday, September 11th, from 10:00 a.m. until noon. All members – and anyone who may be interested in joining our League – are invited to attend board meetings. There is an open forum at the beginning of each meeting for members who would like to address the board. If you plan to attend, please contact any board member to confirm the date and time.

Sign up with Bashas' Shop & Give Program to Help our League

Last year our league was able to earn a little money from the Bashas' Shop & Give program. According to their website, this program is available again this year. Just link your Bashas' Thank You Card to the Group I.D. number our League has been given, and then Bashas' will donate 1% of your purchases to our group.

The program starts over again each year, so even if you joined last year, you need to link your card with our number again this year.

Beginning on September 1st, League members (and their friends, family, anyone) can link their Bashas' Thank You card to our identification number (#24910). The program runs until March 31, 2010. As long as we as a group have earned a minimum donation of \$25.00, Bashas' will write us a check – there is nothing else that you need to do. If you have another group you are supporting, you can still add our i.d. number and the donation will be split.

All you need to do, as soon as possible, is to ask the checkout clerk to link your card to the League of Women Voters of Sedona-Verde Valley's group identification number. It's printed out in large print below so you can cut it out and take it to the store with you.

Thank you for helping, and thank you, Bashas'!

I.D. # 24910

Health Care Reform- Excerpt from LWVAZ Health Issues Behind Health Care

THE HEALTH CARE STATUS QUO: Why Arizona Needs Health Reform

Congress and the President are working to enact health care reform legislation that protects what works about the American health care system and fixes what is broken. Arizonans know that inaction is not an option. Sky-rocketing health care costs are hurting families, forcing businesses to cut or drop health benefits, and straining state budgets. Millions are paying more for less. Families and businesses in Arizona deserve better. We don't know exactly what the reforms should look like, but basically everyone agrees that we can't afford the status quo.

WHY ARIZONANS CAN'T AFFORD THE STATUS QUO

- Roughly 3.5 million people in Arizona get health insurance on the job, where family premiums average \$13,362, about the annual earning of a full-time minimum wage job.
- Since 2000 alone, average family premiums have increased by 97 percent in Arizona.
- Household budgets are strained by high costs: 19 percent of middle-income Arizona families spend more than 10 percent of their income on health care.
- High costs block access to care: 14 percent of people in Arizona report not visiting a doctor due to high costs.
- Arizona businesses and families shoulder a hidden health tax of roughly \$1,700 per year on premiums as a direct result of subsidizing the costs of the uninsured.

AFFORDABLE HEALTH COVERAGE IS INCREASINGLY OUT OF REACH IN AZ

- 20 percent of people in Arizona are uninsured, and 73 percent of them are in families with at least one full-time worker.
- The percent of Arizonans with employer coverage is declining: from 60 to 55 percent between 2000 and 2007.
- Much of the decline is among workers in small businesses. While small businesses make up 73 percent of Arizona businesses, only 32 percent of them offered health coverage benefits in 2006 -- down 18 percent since 2000.
- Choice of health insurance is limited in Arizona. Blue Cross Blue Shield AZ alone constitutes 43 percent of the health insurance market share in Arizona, with the top two insurance providers accounting for 65 percent.
- Choice is even more limited for people with pre-existing conditions. In Arizona, premiums can vary based on demographic factors and health status, and coverage can exclude pre-existing conditions or even be denied completely in some cases.

ARIZONANS NEED HIGHER QUALITY, GREATER VALUE -- AND MORE PREVENTATIVE CARE

- The overall quality of care in Arizona is rated as "Average."
- Preventative measures that could keep Arizonans healthier and out of the hospital are deficient, leading to problems across the age spectrum:
- 18 percent of children in Arizona are obese.

- 19 percent of women over the age of 50 in Arizona have not received a mammogram in the past two years.
- 36 percent of men over the age of 50 in Arizona have never had a colorectal cancer screening.
- 69 percent of adults over the age of 65 in Arizona have received a flu vaccine in the past year.

The need for reform in Arizona and across the country is clear. Arizona families simply can't afford the status quo and deserve better. But the goals are complex and difficult: health care reform that reduces costs for families, businesses and government; protects people's choice of doctors, hospitals and health plans; and assures affordable, quality health care for all Americans. All in a timely manner.

Do Arizonans need help?

"Say a Prayer for Me." This was the only solution regarding health care that Margaret came to as reported in the Arizona Morrison Institute new report "Truth and Consequences: Gambling, Shifting, and Hoping in Arizona Health Care." Many others in the report account how 'when they were young' this was not such a big problem; they could afford their health care and premiums. But more and more they are overwhelmed by health care costs.

\$2.5 Billion. That is the figure that Arizonans are carrying in medical debt, \$2.5 Billion (with a 'B') – just ordinary people.

This report also states "Arizonans prove the point: No insurance means less care, more delays, higher costs, and often financial hardship." They report that the "[t]he 2008 Arizona Health Survey and interviews with Arizonans illustrate how the lack of health insurance affects residents' choices and health:

- For persons without coverage, more than six out of 10 Arizonans surveyed said they had no regular source of health care. This is roughly three times the rate reported by those with insurance.
- The rate of delayed care among the uninsured was almost twice as high compared to those with employer-based coverage. The percent of uninsured who did not obtain recommended prescriptions was 40% higher than among employer-covered respondents.

Read the whole report: TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES: GAMBLING, SHIFTING, AND HOPING IN ARIZONA HEALTH CARE. Arizona Health Futures. ASU: Morrison Institute for Public Policy; ASU: WP Carey School of Business and St. Luke's Health Initiatives. 2009 <http://www.asu.edu/copp/morrison/Truth&ConsequencesFINAL.pdf>

Arizona: At-a-Glance.

For many health statistics and rankings for Arizona visit the Kaiser State Health Facts site.

<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/profileglance.jsp?rgn=4> On this site you can find information for personal use and general state information about disease, care and health status. This user friendly site is highly recommended.

Volunteers Needed to Distribute Political Directory

We recently updated our "Political Directory for Sedona-Verde Valley Voters in Coconino and Yavapai Counties." Voter Service Chair Mary Gassaway and Judy Miller led this effort, and now we need some volunteers to help distribute the brochures to libraries, government offices and other locations throughout the Verde Valley. Please give Mary a call if you can help. Everybody doing a little can get a lot done.

Member Information

Handbook Corrections: Linda Schaefer's new e-mail address is: bobandlyn@g.com. Be sure to let us know when you have a change of contact information so we can add it to the handbook.

Dues Reminder: If you have not yet paid your dues for the 2009-2010 league year, please do so today. Our new dues rates are \$45.00 for an individual membership, \$65.00 for two members in the same household. Make your check payable to LWVSVV and send it to LWVSVV, P.O. Box 966, Sedona, AZ 86339.

If you are a new member, or relatively unfamiliar with what the League is all about, the LWVUS website has a special page for you. Go to the Home Page at www.lwvus.org and then click on “For Members” on the top banner. The page that comes up will have on the left sidebar a special “New Members” menu item that will take you to resources tailored for new members. And be sure to attend our member/new member reception on Sunday, October 11th.

Newsletter: If you have problems reading this Sedona-Verde Valley Voter e-newsletter and would like to receive it as an attachment or by regular mail, please contact Kathy Heidepriem. A PDF version can be read and downloaded at www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org; however, most telephone numbers and e-mails have been removed from the online version.

State and National

Search the Web and raise funds for the League of Women Voters! Help the national League’s Education Fund by logging on to www.goodsearch.com; designate the League of Women Voters Education Fund – LWV as your charity of choice. Then start using GoodSearch as your primary search engine. Each time you search, 50 percent of the advertising revenue (about a penny per search) will automatically go to the LWVEF. The Yahoo search engine is used, so it works fine.

League Nonpartisanship

We all know that the League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We take action on public policy positions established through member agreement. We are political, but nonpartisan, and that means that we do not support or oppose any political party or any candidate for elective office. **Everything the League does should be measured against the yardstick of nonpartisanship.**

When the League of Women Voters was formed in 1920, the choice was made to neither support nor oppose any political party or candidate for public office; this decision continues today to ensure that the League’s voice is heard above the tumult of party politics. **This nonpartisan policy is key to the LWV’s reputation and adds strength to the League’s position on issues.** It makes possible wide acceptance of and participation in League Voter Service and other educational activities. It enables Leagues to hold respected, thoughtful candidate forums in which all eligible candidates participate, to hold balanced forums, and to bring different or opposing views together for true dialogue and discussion.

At the same time, **the League is a political organization** and encourages members to participate fully in the party of their choice (as long as the individual does not appear to be speaking for the League as a whole. Only League Presidents may do that.) It is an advantage to any League to have politically active members and, equally important, it can be a personally satisfying experience for those members who choose to do so.

Each League’s Board is responsible for adopting and carrying out the League’s nonpartisan policy. The Board also is responsible for seeing that both its members and the public understand that policy. This is necessary to ensure the credibility of the League as a nonpartisan organization.

To avoid public confusion, each local League formulates its own nonpartisan policy that includes specific guidelines to govern the political activities of their Board and certain off-board committee chairs. We believe that it is important for all of our members to understand the importance of non-partisanship, and also to know that **while there are restrictions on what Board members may do in the public arena, members are encouraged to be politically active -- as individuals, not in the name of the League of Women Voters.**

Note: The above was extracted from the LWVUS document, “In League,” available at www.lwvus.org.

Below are the guidelines for board members of the Sedona-Verde Valley League:

The general membership of the League is encouraged to participate in political activities at all levels. Therefore, the guidelines below apply only to members of the Board of Directors. The purpose is to uphold the integrity of the League as well as protect the appearance of nonpartisanship.

- a. Board members may continue to have party affiliations as they wish. However they should not hold an elective office in a political party.

- b. Board members may not become a candidate for any elective office, unless it is determined permissible by the Board. Nonpartisanship in the League distinguishes between a candidacy and an elected official. Candidacy is more sensitive because of the League of Women Voters' central focus on voting (for or against)
- c. Before entering into any position of political leadership or visible political activity, a Board member shall report it to the Board for their consideration.
- d. The President, (co-presidents) and Voter Service Chair may not hold elected political office. Other Board members may hold (but not seek) elected office, but should resign or ask for a leave of absence when seeking reelection. The Board decides when a member must resign as a candidate or grant a leave of absence. Elected office holders should abstain from voting on any League issue that contains a conflict of interest. The Board decides whether a conflict of interest could occur.
- e. Upon notification to the Board, Board members may accept appointments to boards and commissions, either as representatives of the League, or as individuals.
- f. Visibility of Board members in a political activity, whether for a candidate's campaign or a social issue not endorsed by the LWV, shall be restricted. Board members may not be an official in a candidate's or issue campaign: such as campaign manager, finance chair etc. Chairing campaign events, newspaper endorsements, letters to the editor in support or opposition, large donations requiring public disclosure are examples of activities to be avoided.
- g. The political activities of a spouse or relative of a Board member are to be considered separate from the activities of the Board member.
- h. When in doubt, the Board will decide on the appropriate level of involvement of a Board member in political activities.

Water Alert: Stormwater Runoff Pollutes!

We offer the following as a part of the League's continuing education of the public on the importance of protecting and conserving water resources in the desert Southwest.

There is a growing awareness of the threat that stormwater runoff poses to our streams, watershed, and drinking water. Pollutants in runoff include sediment; automotive oils and grease, pesticides, fertilizers, and soaps; viruses and bacteria from failing septic systems; and irresponsibly-disposed-of refuse of all kinds. These items can harm fish and wildlife, kill native vegetation, foul drinking water supplies, and make recreation areas unsafe. Human activity causes much of this pollution, and human activity can help avoid it. We can keep drainage channels and ditches on or adjacent to our property clear of debris, cover bare spots in our yards with rock, vegetation, or other materials to prevent the soil from running off; repair any leaks from our cars and properly dispose of used oil; minimize use of fertilizers and pesticides; maintain our septic systems, and use a commercial car wash or wash our cars only on porous, unpaved surfaces. And pick up your trash – especially on public lands and near waterways. Doing these things will help our beautiful, natural environment endure the stress of population growth and urban development. (Source: City of Sedona Stormwater Brochure, "Keep it Clean.")

LWV Sedona Verde Valley Calendar 2009-2010

| Date | Event |
|---|---|
| September 11th, Friday | League Board Meeting, 10:00 a.m. – noon Sedona Shadows Clubhouse 6770 W. S.R. 89A, Sedona |
| September 19 th and 20 th , Saturday and Sunday | League Booth at Sedona Community Fair Airport Mesa, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. |
| October 9 th , Friday | League Board Meeting, 10:00 a.m. - noon Sedona Shadows Clubhouse 6770 S.R. 89A, Sedona |
| October 11 th , Sunday | Membership Meeting, New Member Orientation Sedona Shadows Clubhouse 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. |
| November | Fundraising Picnic (TBD) |

League of Women Voters of Sedona-Verde Valley Board Members 2009-2010

Francine Levengood, VOC (Chairperson)

Pat George, Camp Verde

Liz Danbury, Sedona

Mary Gassaway, Clarkdale

Barbara Litrell, Sedona

Donna Pratt, Sedona

Rita Livingston, Sedona

Beverly Luce, Cottonwood

Mike Ward, Sedona

Representative to LWVAZ
Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer

League Website:
www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org

Newsletter Editor
Kathy Heidepriem

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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.