

# THE VOTER

League of Women Voters Sedona Verde Valley

[www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org](http://www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org)

P. O. Box 966 Sedona, AZ 86339

March 2009

## Board Members 2008 -2009

Kathryn Heidepriem, Sedona

Mary Gassaway, Clarkdale

Rita Livingston, Sedona

Liz Danbury, Sedona

Pat George, Camp Verde

Donna Pratt, Sedona

Mike Ward, Sedona

Carol Wirkus, Sedona

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

## *National Popular Vote Compact Consensus*

## *Water Awareness Forum*

## *Annual Business Meeting*

**March 13<sup>th</sup>** -- Regular meeting of the LWVSVV Board of Directors from 10:00 a.m. to Noon (all members welcome to attend). There is an open forum for members at the beginning of each meeting. Please join us. Sedona Shadows Clubhouse.

**March 14<sup>th</sup>** -- Meeting of the Water Awareness Committee and Water Forum participants at Yavapai Community College, 9:00 a.m. to noon. Call Mike Ward for further information.

**March 21<sup>st</sup>** -- Our March membership meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. at the Mystic Hills Clubhouse. We will discuss and take consensus on a proposal to use the National Popular Vote Compact among states to implement direct election of the President.

**April 18<sup>th</sup>** -- Water Awareness Forum. Room M137, Yavapai Community College (Clarkdale), 9:00 a.m. -1:30 p.m. **Note Change of Location!**

**May 16<sup>th</sup>** -- Annual business meeting. We'll have brunch, elections, and a speaker. **Note Date Change!**

**May 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup>** -- LWVAZ Convention, Tucson.

## **League Anniversary Luncheon**

League members and guests, including a number of community leaders and public officials, gathered at the Agave Room on February 19<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the 89<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the League of Women Voters. Our speaker, Yavapai County District 3 Supervisor Chip Davis, gave a talk on volunteerism in the Verde Valley – a topic right in line with this year’s focus on the importance of being involved in community and public affairs. This yearly event is important to us not only to mark the founding of the League of Women Voters, but also because it is normally our League’s only formal fundraising event. We thank all who attended and those who made an additional donation. This year we actually came out ahead! The funds will be used to support our voter service activities, public education, and operating expenses.

## **National Popular Vote Study**

LWV SVV is participating in the LWVUS study and discussion of the National Popular Vote Compact and whether or not we should add support of that proposal to our existing position supporting the abolition of the Electoral College as the method of determining the winner of a Presidential election.

The National Popular Vote Compact is a proposed compact which, when joined by states which comprise a majority of the current Electoral College votes, would change the method by which their votes are determined. In essence, it would make the votes of the states more truly represent the actual popular vote for President in all states rather than the current method of determining a states’ votes in the Electoral College. At present, each state independently determines how its Electoral College votes will be assigned; some states are “winner take all” and some are based on proportional representation. Some states have already adopted the NPV Compact, some have decided not to participate, some are in the process of deciding, and some states who have adopted the Compact are now considering withdrawing from it.

This is a difficult and often confusing issue. We will discuss, explore and hopefully reach a consensus for our local league on Saturday, Mach 21 at the Mystic Hill Clubhouse. Our conclusions will be submitted to LWVUS to be included in the national consensus, which will then be adopted or rejected by the membership at the 2010 National Convention. Please come and contribute your voice to the discussion.

Anyone interested in joining the study committee in discussing the best way and clearest way to present the information to our members is welcome to attend the next committee meeting. Contact me for details, time and place.

Mary Gassaway  
National Popular Vote Study Chair  
928-634-9888 or [mballgassaway@yahoo.com](mailto:mballgassaway@yahoo.com)

## Voter Service

The Spring 2009 Election season has now ended for LWV SVV. Our last two candidate forums were held in Cottonwood and in Camp Verde.

On Thursday, February 12th, only 12 people attended the Cottonwood forum to hear the 5 candidates for 4 open council seats. Most of those attending were associated with one or another of the campaigns, but we had great press coverage from a reporter who stayed for the whole event and wrote 2 front page stories about it in the Verde Independent and a photographer who put together a terrific collage of all 5 candidates in the first of the stories and a very nice picture of Ellie Bauer, our moderator, in the second story a few days later. There were some really good questions for the candidates from the audience. We enjoyed a new venue at the Old Town Center for the Arts, a wonderful new little theater in Old Town Cottonwood.

On Tuesday February 17, in Camp Verde, about 75 people came to hear their candidates for mayor and council in a forum cosponsored by the Camp Verde Chamber of Commerce. Liz Danbury moderated and again there were some very good questions from the audience, most of who stayed until the end and heard all 6 of the candidates for council and then the 3 for mayor. There were 2 reporters who also stayed for the entire 3 hours - 1 for the Verde Independent and Camp Verde Bugle, and 1 for the other local Camp Verde paper - and best of all 2 TV stations sent cameras and techs to record the forum for broadcast later. Channel 18, the local Camp Verde cable channel, will be broadcasting the event several times before election day, March 10. One of the campaigns has already sent an email to the world promoting the coverage.

Mary Gassaway  
Voter Service Chair  
928-634-9888 or [mballgassaway@yahoo.com](mailto:mballgassaway@yahoo.com)

## Public Forum on the Value of Civil Discourse in Public Affairs

Those of you who missed our January meeting on the importance of civil discourse in public affairs missed an informative and stimulating presentation marked by impressive interaction among our expert panelists and the audience of about 35 individuals. Our speakers were: Tara Jackson, President of Arizona Town Hall; Alberto Olivas, Director of the Maricopa Community Colleges Center for Civic Participation; and Susan Bulfinch, President of the Arizona Association for Conflict Resolution.

Susan Bulfinch led participants in learning exercises showing how to reduce the toxicity of dialogue on public issues, make sure that speakers and listeners are on the same message, and move negotiations forward based on common interests rather than positions that individuals may have staked out previously.

Alberto Olivas presented an issue that is at the heart of the mission of the League of Women Voters: the need for active, informed participation by a broad spectrum of citizens so that government can be more of a partnership between them and their elected officials. He led an interactive discussion about reinventing citizenship and different ways that more people might be encouraged to "return to the public square."

As a long-time supporter of the Arizona Town Hall and its president since July of 2006, Tara Jackson is involved full-time in the promotion of public dialogue to solve important problems confronting our society. She explained the Town Hall process of bringing civic, community, and business leaders from all over the state together to study issues such as education, health care, housing, and land use. They begin with educating themselves with detailed background reports from academic sources, and then come together as a large, diverse group to explore the details of the selected issue from their many perspectives. The goal is to reach consensus on as many solutions as possible and then present recommendations in a final report. The report goes back out to governmental entities and to communities, and is reinforced by a series of outreach events made available to the public throughout the state.

The practical concepts and tools introduced in this forum should remind League members of what we are all about and how we can, indeed, go out into our communities and practice what we preach as we each pursue our own favorite part of making democracy work.

## Water Awareness Program

The Water Program Steering Committee, led by Mike Ward and Carol Johnson, continues to meet and plan our public educational forum on Verde Valley water issues; this forum will be a part of Water Awareness Month. It is now scheduled to take place on April 18<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Clarkdale campus of Yavapai Community College. The forum will be moderated by former State Senator Tom O'Halleran, and experts will address water history, Arizona water laws, the latest geological/hydrological findings, and the politics of water.

Please note this event on your calendar and also note that the location has been changed from Camp Verde to Clarkdale.

## Member Information

**National League:** Financial duress has caused the LWVUS to suspend both the mailed and digital distribution of its "National Voter" magazine. The LWVUS Board is exploring new methods of communicating with the membership until the situation improves. One step members can take is to make use of the LWVUS website, [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org); you can obtain current information there and also sign up for various electronic newsletters and updates. Among these are League e-Voice, LWVUS President's Letters, the weekly Leaders' Updates, and action alerts. If you have any problems accessing these resources, please call Kathy Heidepriem or Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer.

**Program Planning:** The board of directors is currently considering members' suggestions on issues for study, education, and action to be recommended to the membership at the Annual Meeting. You should have received a survey in the mail. Please return it with your ideas as soon as possible. If you need more information, please contact Mary Gassaway.

**Annual Meeting:** The date of our annual meeting has been changed to Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. We are planning to have a brunch, a speaker, and a business meeting. The exact time and place are yet to be decided upon. If you can suggest a nice location with good food at a reasonable price and a meeting room, please call Donna Pratt know and we will check it out. And do plan to attend this important meeting, at which we will elect board members and approve a budget, by-laws revisions, and a program of issues to concentrate on next year.

**LWVSVV Elections:** Elections for the LWVSVV Board of Directors (five members to be elected) and for the Nominating Committee (two members to be elected) for 2009-2010 will be held at our annual meeting on Saturday, May 16<sup>th</sup> (please note this is a new date.) If you would like to run for one of these positions, or would like to suggest a candidate, please contact Nominating Committee Chair Carol Johnson.

**Member Handbook:** All members should have received a 2008-2009 Member Handbook either by e-mail or regular mail. The by-laws were not included because we will be revising them at the Annual Meeting in May. Please look through the handbook as soon as you can and let us know if your contact information is not correct. Call or e-mail Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer or Kathy Heidepriem if we need to make a correction.

**Newsletter:** If you have problems reading the 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](http://www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org); however, most telephone numbers and e-mails have been removed from the online version.

## **Housing Arizona**

Our league selected Housing as an area of emphasis for the current League year, but has not had the resources to form a committee or produce a public forum on the issue. Some members have, however, been following the topic locally in hopes of eventually being able to launch a meaningful effort on it. Fortunately, we had an opportunity on January 27<sup>th</sup> to attend an Arizona Town Hall presentation in Clarkdale, where they reported the findings and recommendations of last year's Arizona Town Hall Meeting on "Housing Arizona." The Town Hall addressed the needs for more diversity in housing as the population becomes more diverse, the need for a variety of housing options, the special needs of rural and Native American communities, the importance of infrastructure and resource conservation, the importance of public education regarding housing, the relationship of housing to the economy and quality of life, and – of course, the current financial crisis in housing at both the national and state level. Among the Town Hall's ten recommendations were those to develop a Comprehensive State Housing Plan, to expand the role of the Arizona Housing Commission, to implement a public education program, to provide financial literacy education to individual consumers, to encourage state and local incentive programs, and to address needs for funding, economic development, regulation, and leadership. Representatives of Verde Valley municipalities, business leaders, and community leaders also made brief presentations. It was an informative and beneficial meeting and generally well received by participants and observers.

## **State League**

LWV ARIZONA has launched a statewide **HEALTH CARE PROJECT!** The goal of this project is to work toward Health Care for all. The objective of this project is to insure passage of a state health care bill by end of legislative session 2010. League committees in each local League in Arizona will be working together to gather information on a variety of health care topics. The committees will work collaboratively to prepare monthly press releases or articles for distribution throughout the state. Local leagues will hold public forums on health care topics. And we will be lobbying state legislators on health care for all! Interested League members are needed to form a health care committee for LWV Sedona-Verde Valley! We have one member for the committee and are looking for at least 2

more members for the HEALTH CARE committee. Interested – email Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer at [rcpbauer@gmail.com](mailto:rcpbauer@gmail.com).

May 29-31 is the LWV Arizona State Convention. It will be held in Tucson. LWV Sedona-Valley can send two delegates to the convention. If you are interested in seeing how our state organization operates – email Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer at [rcpbauer@gmail.com](mailto:rcpbauer@gmail.com)

## **National League**

**LWVUS Legislative Priorities:** The League of Women Voters of the United States, at its Winter Meeting, adopted its legislative agenda for the upcoming year. Global Climate Change and Health Care will be the top legislative priorities. Top priority issues are ones on which major congressional action is expected and on which the LWVUS will seek to be an active player. Tier two priorities are Election Reform and DC Voting Rights. Tier two issues will be acted upon if significant success is possible, though top priorities will take precedence. Tier three issues could be subject for LWVUS action only if good opportunities present themselves, and there is no pressing action on top priority and tier two issues. Tier three issue are: Campaign Finance Reform; CEDAW (the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women); Civil Liberties; Ethics; and Redistricting. The LWVUS prioritizes legislative issues for advocacy in order to focus limited resources on those issues where it is considered the League can have a meaningful impact and there is member interest and opportunity for progress.

It may be of interest to some of you that, several months ago, league members were encouraged to submit their suggestions for LWVUS 2009 legislative priorities. Nearly 100 members and Leagues took the opportunity to register their suggestions. Of the 100, fourteen Leagues discussed the issues among themselves and submitted their suggestions based on the group's conclusions. League members overwhelmingly called for Health Care and Global Climate Change to be top priorities. More information on members' recommendations can be found in a recent report on the national website, Members' section, "Tools for Leaders" homepage.

(The above information was extracted from the LWVUS "Leaders' Update" of February 5, 2009)

***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.***

## LWV Sedona Verde Valley Calendar

Date	Event
March 13 <sup>th</sup> , Friday	League Board Meeting, 10:00 a.m. – noon  Sedona Shadows Clubhouse 6770 W. S.R. 89A, Sedona
March 14 <sup>th</sup> , Saturday	Meeting of Water Committee and Forum Participants 9:00 a.m. – noon  Room M-137, Yavapai Community College 601 Black Hills Drive, Clarkdale
March 21 <sup>st</sup> , Saturday	Membership meeting to take consensus on the National Popular Vote Compact 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  Mystic Hills Clubhouse, 108 E. Mallard Dr., Sedona
April 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2009, Saturday	League of Women Voters Water Forum Yavapai Community College, 601 Black Hills Drive Clarkdale  10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
May 16 <sup>th</sup> , Saturday	Annual Business Meeting and Elections  Speaker and Time tbd
May 29 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> , Fri.-Sun	LWVAZ Convention  Tucson

