



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF GREATER VERDE VALLEY

The VoteR

League of Women Voters of Greater Verde Valley

www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org

P. O. Box 966 Sedona, AZ 86339

May 2012

New Board of Directors and Busy Year Ahead



Cinco de Mayo Speaker Annie Sandoval and LWVGVV President Ellie Bauer; Annie told us the fascinating history of Mexico's Cinco De Mayo Celebration

Annual Meeting Decisions: New Board of Directors, New Name for our League, New Organizational Structure

Our local League of Women Voters has changed its name to officially recognize the fact that its membership and its voter service activities reflect the entire Verde

Valley. By a vote of the membership at its annual meeting on May 5, we are now the "League of Women Voters of Greater Verde Valley." Although the league had its origins in Sedona, we have long worked with all Verde Valley cities, towns and unincorporated communities to moderate forums, facilitate community planning, study issues, and host educational meetings. "The new name better describes how and where we actually operate," League President Ellie Bauer explains.

Also at the meeting, the board of directors for 2012-2013 was determined; it consists of Ellie Bauer, Judy Miller, Liz Danbury, Donna Pratt, Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer, Ruth Kiessel, and Rita Livingston. There is one vacancy remaining. Elected to serve on next year's Nominating Committee were Janet Kissinger and Kathy Davis. Thanks on behalf of the membership to all of you who have offered your services for the upcoming (busy) year.

A third item of significance that all members need to know about is the change in organizational structure implemented in the newly revised by-laws. We have eliminated the Leadership Team concept and replaced it with a traditional organization with designated offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer to be selected from among the board members. These officers also constitute an Executive Committee, which will supervise the affairs of the organization, be empowered to act for the Board when necessary between regular meetings, fix the hour and place of meetings, and make recommendations to the Board. A copy of the complete bylaws and a membership list are being sent to all paid-up members of the league.

Important Note: At our recent meeting of the board of directors, Ellie Bauer was elected to serve as President, Judy Miller as Vice-President, and Liz Danbury as Treasurer. We still need someone for the Secretary position, and there is a vacancy on the Board. Any member who may be willing to accept an appointed one-year position on the Board should contact Ellie Bauer as soon as possible so we can fill this gap. (The Board meets once a month from September to May (excluding December)).

A Very Special President's Message from Ellie Bauer:

IRISH BLESSING

Take time to work. It is the price of success.

Take time to think. It is the source of power.

Take time to play. It is the secret of perpetual youth.

Take time to read. It is the foundation of wisdom.

Take time to be friendly. It is the road to happiness.

Take time to love and be loved. It is the privilege of the gods.

Take time to share, life is too short to be selfish.

Take time to laugh. Laughter is the music of the soul.

Local Program for 2012-2013

Also at the annual meeting our league adopted a program of work entitled "*Power the Vote through Civic Engagement*". In addition to voter registration, activities will include primary and general election forums and distribution of ballot issue information. Once the fall elections are over, we will be updating our Political Directory for Verde Valley Voters. In accordance with our current practice of alternating "election focus" years with "education focus" years, we plan to sponsor a forum on the judicial review process in the spring of 2013.

Voter Service

This year, all League activities are focused on voter registration, candidate forums, ballot issues and elections. With a doubling of Congressional, Legislative and County districts encompassing the Verde Valley, the League will likely host twice as many forums as in the past. As a sector partner of the state-wide Sandra Day O'Connor House Centennial Voter Engagement Project, the League is now working with many others throughout the Verde Valley to increase voter registration, encourage civic action and expand citizen participation in the 2012 election cycle. The Verde Valley component of the project now has its own website; you can find it at www.verdevalleyengagement.org.

Voter Registration

May is Voter Registration Month in the Verde Valley; registration stations have been scheduled by the League and other partners in the Sandra Day O'Connor House Centennial Voter Engagement Project. The goal of the project is to increase voter registration and encourage civic participation in the 2012 election year cycle.

Watch for voter registration activities at community events, schools and other locations throughout the Verde Valley. The important message is "Register and Vote". The League is distributing a "pocket guide" to remind voters of key election facts--how to register, where to vote, a list of voting centers, and guidance for independent voter registration.

League Submits Consensus Results for Study on Privatization of Government Services

Eleven league members gathered in April to discuss and decide on how to answer numerous questions concerning how, when, and whether government functions, services and assets should be considered for privatization. After an hour or so of lively conversation, consensus was taken and the group was able to reach consensus on a majority of the questions. Mary Gassaway recorded our responses and they have now been sent on to LWVUS. The next step in the process is for their Privatization Study Committee to assess inputs from all around the country and determine whether there is sufficient consensus to draft a policy position. If so, it will be sent to the national board for approval. If approved, the policy position will

take its place in "Impact on Issues," the consolidated documentation of all such national league policy positions that can be used for advocacy on national level issues.

League of Women Voters of Arizona

LWVAZ Council meeting held May 19-20 was a wonderful event. In addition to the adoption of the budgets for 2012-2013 and the election of 2 new board members, delegates heard presentations on the LWVUS Power the Vote campaign with a focus on the Disclose Act, Impartial Courts and the changes proposed in the ballot measure that is on the November ballot; and the League and Citizen's United – campaign financing in today's environment. We had two excellent speakers – Dr. Jonathan Weisbach and Sandra Walker. Dr. Weisbach's topic was "The Future of the Affordable Care Act" and Ms. Walker, a former warden, spoke about state-run and private prison governance in Arizona. Both timely and very interesting topics!

At the board meeting on Sunday, the LWVAZ board took stands on one ballot measure for the November ballot and two initiatives that are currently collecting signatures for qualifying for the ballot. The League is supporting the Quality Education and Jobs initiative and will submit a ballot argument in favor of this initiative if it makes to the November ballot. We are going to be neutral on SCR1001 (ballot measure number has not been given to this measure yet). The ballot measure proposes several changes in the merit selection system for judges in Maricopa, Pima and Pinal counties. And lastly we are opposing the Top 2 (Open Primaries) initiative currently collecting signatures for the ballot. The positions the League has taken on these initiatives and ballot measures are based on existing League positions. More information will be forthcoming on why we took the stands we did.

And lastly, we have started work on the Voter Guide to the state ballot measures. Currently there are 7 ballot measures that have been sent to the ballot by the state legislature and it is a guess that maybe 3 others will make it to the ballot through the initiative process.

A huge THANK YOU to the League of Women Voters Metro Phoenix for hosting an excellent state council meeting!

National League/Money in Elections: What the League Can Do

The following is a summary of a memo sent by LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara to League leaders in early May. The full letter can be viewed at www.lwv.org - search on *memo money in elections* and that will take you right to it. This issue is of great importance for our democracy and the MacNamara memo is well worth reading in its entirety.

Dear League Leaders:

We are all aware that the huge amount of special interest money, particularly in federal races, has been a problem for years. We also know that these problems have been magnified by the Supreme Court ruling in the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* case which unleashed corporate spending for supposedly independent campaign expenditures and which has resulted in millions and millions of dollars in secret contributions. And we are also concerned that a great deal of this money is going into highly negative, and often misleading, election-related ads.

There is a lot of frustration within the League - and around the country generally - about what can be done to minimize the ramifications in the 2012 election year and beyond.

I'm writing today to tell you what LWVUS is doing in this area - and to identify some ways in which your League and members can get involved as well.

LWVUS ACTIVITIES UNDERWAY:

1. We are continuing the fight to pass the DISCLOSE Act. This essential legislation will require financial disclosure for all campaign advertising. No longer will trade associations, corporations and wealthy individuals be able to make secret contributions to run election ads. You can expect a series of up-to-the-minute action alerts. The national office will also be working with Leagues in key states both to lobby directly and to reach out to the media in support of the DISCLOSE Act.

2. With a grant from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Shelter Rock, NY, we will be joining with one or two state Leagues to purchase advertising to bring the reform message to the public. I spoke at an exciting event at the church recently and can report great enthusiasm for challenging secret money in politics.

3. As you know, the Federal Elections Commission is not enforcing current law on campaign finance, so we and our sister organizations have been pressing for big changes. As a start, we've called on the President to appoint five new commissioners to the agency. Our efforts on the petition to the President reached its goal of 25,000 signers and we are anxiously awaiting his promised response to the petition and the continuing problems at the FEC.

4. A new League Campaign Finance Task Force is now up and running, which includes nine knowledgeable and committed League members from around the country. The Task Force will serve as a resource to the LWVUS Board and will provide information and input on campaign finance issues, including short- and long-term strategies for reform. In the short term, the Task Force will be researching and providing information to members on the proposed constitutional amendments that have been introduced in the U.S. Congress.

5. Senior staff is participating in an Independent Sector working group, whose focus is on developing a response for the non-profit community on the increasing use of existing and new 501c(4), social welfare organizations, to engage in electoral

activities. One concern is that the valuable role played by social welfare organizations will be tainted by new groups that are being created under section 501c(4) of the tax code but whose purpose is primarily to funnel funds into electoral races.

6. The LWVUS Board is recommending to Convention a comprehensive program to educate members and communities on the issue of campaign finance in order to inform our education and legislative efforts as needed.

WHAT LEAGUES CAN DO

1. Engage in the League's Money in Elections reform campaign. Call on your Senators and Representative to support the DISCLOSE Act. Respond to LWVUS action alerts, reach out to your members to engage them in this topic, especially to meet with your federal representatives or their staff in the state or district. Write a letter-to-the-editor of your local papers and call attention to the problems of secret money in campaigns. Voters deserve to know where the money is coming from.

2. Participate in the "Stations: Stand by Your Ad" campaign. LWVUS is encouraging Leagues to participate in this project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania that identifies ways TV and radio stations can reduce the number of erroneous campaign ads run by third party organizations.

3. Engage in public education about how to watch TV campaign ads – particularly those sponsored by third party (and supposedly independent) organizations – with a critical eye. LWVUS/EF hopes to produce some tips on this topic, and is soliciting materials from state and local leagues who may be working on this already... but we need your help.

CONCLUSION

Big money in elections – and the related avalanche of questionable and negative campaign ads – will be an inescapable reality in election year 2012. But the League is not sitting back quietly while that happens! There is much to be done, and I encourage everyone to make "money in elections" an important part of our Power the Vote efforts this year. Thanks for all you do!

Board Members 2012-2013

Ellie Bauer, Clarkdale
President

Judy Miller, Cornville
Vice President

Liz Danbury, Sedona
Treasurer

Donna Pratt, Sedona
Membership

Robyn Prud'homme- Bauer, Clarkdale
State League Vice President

Rita Livingston, Sedona

Ruth Kiessel, Cottonwood
Voter Service

Off-Board
Kathy Heidepriem
Newsletter

Off-Board
Evie Rowland
Voter Registration

LWVSVV CALENDAR	2011-2012
Date	Event
May 15 th , Tuesday	General Elections in Clarkdale, Jerome, and Sedona
May 17 th , Thursday 1:00 – 3:00 pm	LWVGWV Board Meeting Oak Creek Valley Clubhouse
May 19 th -20 th , Saturday and Sunday Phoenix	LWVAZ State Council
June 9 th -12 th , Saturday – Tuesday Washington, DC	LWVUS Convention
August 28 th , Tuesday	Primary Election Day – Last day to register is July 30 th
November 6 th , Tuesday	General Election Day

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.