

The VoteR

League of Women Voters of Sedona-Verde Valley

www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org

P. O. Box 966 Sedona, AZ 86339

November 2009

President's Letter

On October 28, we sent out 126 fundraising appeal letters to various businesses. To date, we have received several replies and will be doing follow up calls.

We have been asked by the Sedona WaterWise Alliance to participate in April's water awareness month. We plan to have a breakfast on Wednesday, March 31 and will be getting a speaker for it. We are looking for a place to hold this breakfast. If anyone has any ideas or is willing to help, please let me know.

Thank you.

Upcoming Events

Upcoming events include a membership meeting for program planning in January; candidate forums in February for municipal elections in Clarkdale, Jerome, and Sedona; our celebration of the League's 90th Anniversary with a luncheon on February 10th, a breakfast in late March to honor local leaders in water awareness (as a precursor to Water Awareness Month in April), and the League's Annual Meeting on May 1. We plan to continue forums and workshops on Civil Discourse as well.

Board of Directors Meeting: The next meeting of the LWVSVV Board of Directors will take place at the Sedona Shadows Clubhouse on Friday, December 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.

Fall Membership Meeting: Update on League Health Care Activities

League members and new members met on Sunday, October 11th, for an afternoon social and a presentation by Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer on the history of health care reform efforts; the League of Woman Voters has been involved in reform efforts for many years. We have advocated strongly in favor of reform since adopting a comprehensive policy position in 1993.

Robyn gave us an overview of the League position, which calls for:

1. A basic level of quality health care available to all residents at an affordable cost.

2. A national health insurance plan financed through general taxes in place of individual insurance premiums and administered either by a combination of private and public sectors or by a combination of federal, state and/or regional government agencies.
3. Financing this basic level of health care through increased taxes, provided that reforms contain effective cost control strategies.
4. Measures to ensure that high quality basic health care services are available to all U.S. residents and that the ability of an individual to pay for services should not be a factor in the allocation of those resources.

(You can read the League's position on health care in detail at www.lwv.org. Click on the Members section, then go to the "Library." The document "Impact on Issues" can be found at the Online Store. It contains all of the League's adopted policy positions. "Impact on Issues" can be downloaded for free or a paper copy is available for purchase.)

Efforts to improve the U.S. healthcare system have been going on since the early 20th century. There have been many steps along the way, including the implementation of Medicare in the 1960's. With the alarming increases in the cost of health care in our nation over the past two decades, it has become apparent to ordinary citizens and to a broad spectrum of health care professionals that the current system, as currently structured, is not sustainable. Thus, the current push for reform. The League accepts that not all of its goals will be accomplished with the legislation currently under consideration but that the current momentum for reform must be supported. The League is still advocating in favor of a public plan to ensure that true competition among health insurance providers actually takes place; a truly competitive environment should provide more alternatives for everyone to choose from while also driving down costs.

Following her presentation, Robyn led a lively Q & A period and encouraged us all to lend our voices to the reform effort. Our League has already responded to the National League's call to contact our local newspapers and our elected representatives in Congress on this matter. We members, as individuals, can participate in this grassroots effort by letting Representative Ann Kirkpatrick and Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl know of our own experiences and concerns with the status of health care in America and where it should go next.

Voter Service

The League of Women Voters of Sedona-Verde Valley is planning to host candidate forums for the spring elections in Clarkdale, Jerome, and Sedona. Our Voter Service Committee, chaired by Mary Gassaway, will be gearing up in January to plan forums to take place in February. If you would like to join the committee and enjoy the excitement of helping to put on these forums, contact Mary by phone at 634-9888 or by e-mail at mballgassaway@yahoo.com

The primary elections are scheduled for Tuesday, March 9th, with general elections on Tuesday, May 18th. Clarkdale will be electing two town council members, Jerome will elect five town council members, and Sedona will be electing three council members for 4-year terms and one for a 2-year term; and also the mayor for a 2-year term. Sedona will also have a ballot question to determine whether the Mayor shall be elected by the people or appointed by the council beginning in 2012. These elections will be by mail-in ballot only. The last day to register to vote in the primaries is February 8, 2010 and the last day to register for the general election is April 19th. To register, contact your City or Town Clerk or the election department of Coconino or Yavapai County. You can also register online through www.azsos.gov.

As information becomes available it will be posted on our website at www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org and will be sent to you in the January Voter.

January Program Planning, Meeting of the Membership

Program Planning is the process by which leagues at all levels select issues for emphasis in the upcoming League year. It usually starts in January, when the LWVUS asks state and local leagues to begin discussing what policy issues they think should be brought up at the national convention in June. This is a good time for local leagues to bring their memberships together to talk about high priority local issues that might be good topics for detailed study, community education, or advocacy. Our local league's current program issues are health care reform and civil discourse.

Program Planning will be discussed at December's Board meeting, and we hope at that time to schedule a membership meeting for sometime in January. We'll let you know the date as soon as possible and also post it on the website. As usual, there will be refreshments and the opportunity to socialize and meet new and old League friends.

Member Information

This coming February, the League of Women Voters will celebrate 90 years of working to encourage informed and active participation in all levels of government. We are a respected non-partisan political organization that neither supports nor opposes political parties or candidates. Members enrich their lives by educating themselves and the public on policy issues and by ensuring that people have the opportunity to be well-informed when they go to the polls.

In the recent past, our League has presented public forums for candidates to speak to and with voters prior to municipal, county, state, and national elections; hosted pro- and con- presentations on state and local ballot measures, organized free public educational programs on such issues as water, health care, civil discourse, and immigration; and published – in cooperation with APS and Coconino County – a political directory for voters in Sedona and the Verde Valley.

But we can't keep it up without your help.

The IMPORTANCE of Membership

The LWVUS wants us to remind everyone that **members are every League's most valuable asset**. Members give the League clout, visibility, and credibility. The organization's strong grassroots system distinguishes the League from other organizations; the League is *the* organization where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

Members belong to all three levels of the League – local, state, and national. Membership dues make up a significant portion of the income in most local League budgets. Collecting those dues is the responsibility of the local League (that's us!). And although we set the dues amount, included in that amount are payments of \$29.20 per member that we must pass along to the national League and \$9.00 per member that goes to the State League. We have symbiotic relationships with both of them – they provide us with many resources and we provide them with grassroots participation and local information and support. But the dues structure does not leave us very much funding to operate with.

So, in order to survive and to grow, local leagues must attract new members and also retain the ones they have. To do this, we try to design events and activities that will appeal to diverse groups, and encourage all members as individuals to promote the League and League membership at every opportunity. In other words, we need lots of input and lots of support. We hope that all members know that we want them to participate and to contribute their talents in ways that are most satisfying to them as individuals. Active members are always needed, but those who join to be better informed or to provide moral support are needed too.

Since we, like most other nonprofit volunteer groups, have been hurt by the recent economic downturn, we have begun a modest fundraising effort to augment member dues and donations. We have sent out an appeal for donations to a number of local business owners and community leaders. We will also contact and try to win back past members who have not rejoined, and initiate a member recruitment drive when we have the resources to do so. If you have a friend or acquaintance whom you might recommend for League membership, please let League President Fran Levorgood or Membership Chair Donna Pratt know, and they will contact them on behalf of our League. We thank you for your support.

Please bring your dues up to date: 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.

Welcome New Members !

Kathleen Cheney of Cottonwood has recently joined the League. We also welcome Paul Posa back as a member.

We welcome you both and hope to see you soon at our local league activities.

Mike Ward and Barbara Litrell Leave Board to Run for Office

Two members of our current Board of Directors have stepped down in order to run for public office; this is in accordance with League Non-Partisan Policy. (The League does not endorse candidates and cannot appear to do so.) We wish them both the best of luck in their endeavors. As you know, the League of Women Voters encourages active participation in government, including service by members in appointed and elected official positions.

That leaves us with a couple of vacancies to fill. Please call Fran Levorgood (554-4509) if you would like to step up and fill in for the rest of the year. If you would like to recommend another member for appointment to the board, that would be welcome also. Either way, your help is needed.

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

Don't forget that you can help the League by linking your Basha's Thank You card to our group i.d., which is **24910**. As a member of their Shop & Give program, our League will receive a donation of 1% of purchases made with that group i.d. number between now and the end of April. We need to earn a donation of at least \$25.00, so please ask your cashier to link your card the next time you go through checkout. ***Thank you!***

State and National

ACTION ALERT:
Support Strong Health Care Reform Legislation

America is facing a health care crisis caused by a combination of skyrocketing costs and an insurance system that leaves 47 million of us without any coverage. The current health care system is endangering both our economy and our health, and voters have made it clear that they want change. Business as usual is not an option.

Congress must take action to pass strong health care reform legislation that guarantees quality, safe and affordable health care to all U.S. residents including the choice of a public insurance plan. It is universal coverage that will determine the humanity of our system. The legislation must include a benefits package that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care, acute care, long-term care, and mental health care. In addition, any health care package must include prescription drug coverage and allow for pre-existing conditions.

Legislation must establish a system-wide program to coordinate information, establish best practices and provide consumers the information they need to protect themselves and their families. It is essential that comparative data on treatments, benefits packages and medical outcomes be made publicly available so that individuals can make informed health decisions and so costs can be controlled.

Cost containment measures must take place in the context of overall health care reform. We must reduce or eliminate the cost-shifting that currently exists in health care financing and work to streamline the system. Legislation must provide effective cost controls, equitable distribution of services and allow for efficient and economical delivery of care. To achieve this kind of comprehensive, system-wide reform will take a shared effort by citizens and Congress.

Take action today to encourage our Senators McCain and Kyl to support strong health care reform legislation! Take a moment and go to: www.lwv.org and "click" on Action Alert, enter your zip code and send your message to our Senators.

LWV Sedona Verde Valley Calendar 2009-2010

Date	Event
December 11th, Friday	League Board Meeting, 10:00am – noon Sedona Shadows Clubhouse 6770 W. S.R. 89A, Sedona
January 9th, Friday	League Board Meeting, 10:00am - noon Sedona Shadows Clubhouse 6770 W. S.R. 89A, Sedona
January, DATE TO BE DECIDED	Membership meeting for Program Planning LOCATION TBD
February 10 th , Wednesday	League 90 th Anniversary Luncheon, 11:30am -1:30 pm Agave Room, Best Western Inn of Sedona
February 12 th , Friday	League Board Meeting, 10:00am - noon
February, DATES TO BE DECIDED	Candidate Forums for Municipal Elections in Clarkdale, Jerome, and Sedona
March 31, Tuesday	Water Awareness Breakfast TIME TBD LOCATION TBD
April, DATES TO BE DECIDED	Candidate Forums for General Elections, if needed
May 1 st , Saturday	Annual Meeting and Elections TIME TBD LOCATION TBD

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.

Political Directory Now Available on Website: Our recently published “Political Directory for Sedona-Verde Valley Voters in Coconino and Yavapai Counties” is now available on the local league website for reading and/or downloading. If you need a paper copy or copies, let us know. Go to www.lwvsedona-verdevalley.org.

[League of Women Voters of Sedona-Verde Valley Board Members 2009-2010](#)

Francine Levensgood, VOC (Chairperson)
Liz Danbury, Sedona
Rita Livingston, Sedona
Beverly Luce, Cottonwood
Off-Board: Robyn Prud'homme- Bauer
Representative to LWVAZ

Pat George, Camp Verde
Mary Gassaway, Clarkdale
Donna Pratt, Sedona

Off-Board: Kathy Heidepriem
Newsletter and Website

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.



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®