

.Update on activities, events, and plans for the League of Women Voters Greater Verde Valley



The Voter

League of Women Voters
Greater Verde Valley
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March 2016

President's Letter

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS: NOW IS THE TIME!

Now is the time for members of the League to choose how they would like to be involved. We have many interesting and exciting roles to be filled. See which area -- 10 choices -- appeals to you and drop an email to blitrell@aol.com for more info and to join that specific team. Meet new people, make new friends, learn new things, make a difference in our community...

1. Voter Registration - conduct voter registration at key times and strategic locations throughout this year.
2. Voter Education Programs- plan speaker programs on critical issues you care about for July-Aug-Sept-Oct.

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LWVGVV President
Barbara Litrell

Vice President
Robyn Prudhomme-
Bauer

Treasurer-Secretary
Mary Gassaway

3. Candidate Forums - conduct candidate forums
July/August/Sept/Oct. Training will be mid to late June.

4. Voting Rights Festival - plan the Voting Rights Festival for
June/July

5. At Home Political Conversations - Offer to host a gathering
at your home for good ol' political issues discussion!

6. Annual Meeting Planning - Help plan the June 4 Annual
Meeting.

7. Women's Right to Vote Celebration - Help plan the August
18 gathering at Vino di Sedona

8. League Member Meetings- Help plan regular League
member meetings beginning November 2016 focused on LWV
issue positions

9. New Member Team- Help recruit and welcome new
members

10. Political Book Club - Join the existing group or start another
chapter. 10 is the best number for each group.

Barbara Litrell
blitrell@aol.com

Planning Underway for Annual Meeting in June; Member Input is Needed!

The League of Women Voters Greater Verde Valley will be
holding its annual membership meeting and elections on
Saturday, June 4th (10:00am, please save the date). We need
member input to get ready for this meeting.

1) If you would like to be considered for a position on the
board of directors or on next year's nominating committee -- or
if you know of a member you would like to suggest -- please let
Barbara (blitrell@aol.com) or Kathy
(kathryn.heidepriem@gmail.com) know. The nominating
committee is seeking candidates.

Directors
Kathy Davis
Janet Kissinger



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

League Board

Third Thursday
Cottonwood
2:00-4:00 p.m.

April 4th

Voter Registration
Mingus H.S.

April 18th

"Critical Election
Issues 2016 -
Federal Lands"

Sedona Campus
Yavapai College
9:00-10:30am

Clarkdale Campus
Yavapai College
noon-1:30pm

April 18th, Evening

Forum on Prop 123

2) At our annual meetings, we also decide what issues we would like to focus on for the upcoming year. This is called "program planning" in the League. [What we would like to know from the membership is "What are the top two or three Verde Valley issues -- or a state or national issue that impacts the Verde Valley -- that we might want to learn more about?"](#) We will pick one or more of them to study, perhaps do a forum or presentation, and possibly develop our own position for advocacy.

Send your ideas to Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer (rcpbauer@gmail.com), to Barbara, or to LWVGVV@gmail.com.

The annual meeting will also include brunch, a speaker, awards, and a vote on the budget.

Welcome New Members

We are delighted to welcome these new members to our ranks:

Maryann Kenney, Village of Oak Creek
Lori Rubenstein, Clarkdale
Lynn Zonakis, Sedona
Cheryl Fleet, Sedona

Thank you also to **Stephen and Charlotte Kling** of Cornville for rejoining the League. We're happy to have you back!

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings and events!

Voter Education Program: Critical Arizona Election issues 2016

Land Transfer or Land Grab?
The Controversy over Control of Federal Lands in the West

Our next monthly meeting on critical Arizona election issues will take place on Monday April 18th; our featured speaker will be

Education Funding
Cottonwood

April 23rd

Book Club
RSVP B.
Litrell if you
are interested

May 16th
"Critical Election
Issues 2016 -
Women's Rights"

Sedona 9-10:30am
Clarkdale noon-
1:30pm

May 17

Special Election
Proposition 123,
AZ Education
Financing,
Prop 124
Public Retirement
Benefits

June-October

Voter Registration
Candidate Forums
Voting Rights Film
Festival

June 4th

LWVGVV Annual
Meeting, Elections,
Speaker on Voting
Rights
Elks Lodge,
Sedona
10:00am-noon

June 7th

New Member/
Prospective Member

Susan Culp, an expert consultant on natural resource management in the Intermountain West. She will be talking about conflict between states and the federal government over the control and use of public land. Efforts by western states to mount legal strategies to force the federal government to transfer public lands to state control have been gaining new momentum over the past few years. This has stimulated a passionate debate throughout the West, and this presentation will explore the history of the issue, explain the constitutional cases being made both for and against federal land transfer efforts, and discuss the competing views about the role and purpose of public lands.

This presentation is co-sponsored by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute of Yavapai College and the League of Women Voters Greater Verde Valley. It will take place on Monday, April 18th, from 9:00-10:30am at the Sedona campus of the College, and again from noon-1:30 at the Clarkdale campus. It is free and open to the public.

Future voter education meetings on critical election issues are scheduled for May 16th, June 20th, July 18th, August 15th, September 19th, and October 17th.

Arizona State Prison System Needs Reform

Dave Wells teaches Political Science and Organizational Leadership at ASU and also is a co-founder and director of research at the nonpartisan Grand Canyon Institute. He gave a dynamic presentation on what is going on in the state prison system and explained a number of reforms that could improve it. Unfortunately, most of these reforms require both legislative action and increased funding.

Problem: Too many people are incarcerated - 35,000 in state prisons and 5,436 in private prisons. That's 6 inmates per thousand residents

Problem: Most of those serving prison terms committed drug-related crimes; only 25% are considered a danger to others.

Problem: Because of Arizona's extreme fiscal austerity, rehabilitation programs and transition programs are

**Meeting
5:00-7:00pm**

August 18th

**Women's Right
to Vote Celebration
Vino Di Sedona**

August 30th

Primary Election

November 8th

**General Election
National
State
County
Municipal
Ballot Issues**



**The League of
Women Voters,
a nonpartisan
political
organization,
encourages
informed and
active
participation**

underfunded (as are child welfare programs and foster care, which could help prevent young people from turning to drugs and crime in the first place).

Problem: Strict sentencing guidelines and practices, plus overuse of felony charges, lead to unnecessary imprisonment and lack of ability to find jobs following incarceration.

Conclusion: There are current legislative proposals to expand transition services, increase spending on mental health care, and establish community work for prisoners approaching their release times. However, Arizona needs to rethink its priorities to provide more resources for services aimed to reduce recidivism and also to revise its criminal code, particularly in terms of sentencing.

For more information on this and other public policy issues, you can visit the Grand Canyon Institute at www.grandcanyoninstitute.org.

State League News

It has been a very busy month for the League of Women Voters in Arizona. March 22 launched a vigorous discussion on access to voting - especially in Maricopa County. LWVAZ responded swiftly to the voting concerns and what changes could be made, see our press statement at [http://newsletters.getresponse.com/archive/info_791565/LWV-Arizona-reacts-to-voters-waiting-to-vote-388031802.html?t_%E2%80%A6=&u=BwjJS](http://newsletters.getresponse.com/archive/info_791565/LWV-Arizona-reacts-to-voters-waiting-to-vote-388031802.html?_E2%80%A6=&u=BwjJS)

At the state board meeting the League of Women Voters made bold statements on several key issues. The League of Women Voters of Arizona opposes Proposition 123 on the May 17, 2016 special election. The LWVAZ Board says Prop. 123, devised by Governor Doug Ducey and legislative leaders, is offered as a solution, but in reality only provides 12% of the funding promised by Prop 301, plus puts the State Land Trust in future jeopardy by dramatically increasing withdrawals from the Trust.

Two other actions taken by the LWVAZ board were;

1. To oppose the Open and Honest Elections initiative now

in government,
works to
increase
understanding
of major public
policy issues,
and influences
public policy
through
education
and advocacy.



VOTER REGISTRATION

Let people know that if they have an AZ driver's license they can register to vote or make any needed changes at:

<https://servicearizona.com>

OR call your County Recorder's office:
Yavapai: 928-771-3248
Coconino: 928-679-7860

FOR FURTHER INFO:
AZ Secretary of State

www.azsos.gov

OR:



collecting signatures to qualify for the ballot.

- Even though it does away with the party primaries, it does little to insure greater vote representation. Third party candidates and most likely independent candidates will have a much more difficult time collecting signatures to qualify for the ballot because they often times have a small base of supporters or no organized base.
- It does not make the process more equitable. Again 3rd Party and independent candidates have little capacity to raise the \$ needed to qualify for the ballot. With the expansion of “dark money” into mainstream campaigns, mainly Republican and Democratic campaigns, these campaigns would not have an equitable playing field.

2. To oppose the Open and Honest Disclosure initiative now collecting signatures to qualify for the ballot. LWVAZ is very much concerned with the explosion of “Dark Money” coming into Arizona campaigns - there are troubling areas that cause LWVAZ not support this initiative:

- It may codify Citizens United in the AZ Constitution, LWV is very much in opposition to Citizens United and is actively working to overturn it. And if it is likely to be overturned with the changes in the US Supreme Court. Arizona’s Constitution would be in conflict with the US Constitution.
- It does not cover issue campaigns (Ballot measures). In fact it is silent on social welfare, 501c4, organizations.
- It gives enforcement to Secretary of State and Attorney General over the enforcement regulations given to the Clean Elections Commission. LWVAZ strongly continues to support all provisions of the Clean Elections Commission as passed by the voters in 1998.

And lastly, there are troubling bills in the Legislature that most likely will be on the desk of the Governor soon. Please tell your elected representative and the Governor that you do not support the Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (vouchers).

Public education needs to be adequately funded and ESAs take away dollars from public education. And the other troubling bill is SB1516 - overhaul of campaign finance regulations in AZ. It is laudable to simplify these regulations BUT it does not require 501c4 organizations to disclose where



**Please consider
donating to the
LWVAZ Education
Fund**

**Visit the LWV
of the U.S.
at
www.lwv.org**

**Visit the LWV
of Arizona
at
www.lwvaz.org**

their contributions come from for their lobbying activities.

LWVGWV urges its members to contact your elected representatives and give your voice to these issues.

Elections

On May 17th Arizona voters will be asked to approve Proposition 123 (Education Finance), which would increase the distributions from the State Land Trust Permanent Endowment Fund from 2.5% to 6.9% to benefit Arizona K-12 schools, colleges, and other beneficiary institutions.

Also on the ballot is Proposition 124, which changes Arizona public retirement systems to adjust benefits in the Public Safety personnel system to alleviate underfunding, including a cost of living adjustment indexed for inflation and capped at 2% per year.

Both propositions are Amendments to the Arizona Constitution.

Voter Services

The League will continue its voter registration efforts leading up to the fall primaries and general election. We will also have a voter registration visit to Mingus High School on April 4th

As candidate ballots are finalized from June on, we will be holding candidate forums for competitive races in our towns, counties, and congressional districts.

We'll need League volunteers to work at the candidate forums; training will be provided for those who are interested. Being involved in these forums -- and attending them -- is a gratifying civic experience. PLEASE HELP WITH THIS IF YOU CAN; THESE FORUMS ARE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES THAT THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PROVIDES TO COMMUNITIES.

Please contact Barbara Litrell (blitrell@aol.com or 649-0135) if you want to sign up or learn more.

Each year the League of Women Voters of Arizona prepares a Nonpartisan Voter Guide to the ballot propositions in the State.

We may be asked to help out with preparation or distribution. Please say yes if you are asked.

The League of Women Voters Promotes Excellence in Civics Education

Five LWVAZ Leagues from Central Yavapai County, Greater Tucson, **Greater Verde Valley**, Metro Phoenix, Northwest Maricopa County, and the State LWVAZ, all contributed funding to the LWVAZ Education Fund for teachers from their geographic area to attend the 3rd Annual Civic Learning Conference, sponsored by the Arizona Department of Education in partnership with the Maricopa Community Colleges.

This is the third year the LWV has participated in this scholarship program. Local League members contacted area schools encouraging them to attend the conference and offered to pay their registration fee. When asked if the teachers would have been able to attend the conference if the district had to pay for their registration, 10 of the 13 respondents indicated their district could not have afforded to send them. Two did not know.

We can all be proud that the LWV is a strong supporter of Civic Education.

(From a press release by the Northwest Maricopa County League of Women Voters.)

LWVGVV sponsored 4 teachers from the Verde Valley to attend this conference: Frank Marston, Emma Fitzhugh, Kevin Hutson and Todd Day.- all from the Cottonwood Oak Creek School District,



[Arizona Teachers at Civic Learning Conference](#)

[From the National League of Women Voters: Honor Women's History Month by Viewing a Slideshow on League History](#)

The League of Women Voters has spent nearly a century helping shape our country's political and social history. To celebrate Women's History Month, the LWVUS pulled some pictures from the archives for a brief slide show highlighting a few of the League's accomplishments over the last 96 years.

[View the show by following this link, and take pride in being part of such a distinguished organization.](#)

(Provided by LWVUS Executive Director, Wylecia Wiggs Harris)

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