

The Voter

News from the League of Women Voters of NW Maricopa County

March 2015

Message from the President:

As noted in past newsletters and on our website calendar, we have some important upcoming events:

March 10 - Unit meeting on Human Trafficking at Lois Brechner's home. This event has been arranged by Bonnie Boyce-Wilson

March 26 - Election Protection Forum featuring the county recorders from Maricopa and Yavapai Counties. This General Meeting will be held at Dysart Unified School District Administration office in Surprise.

April 9 - Annual luncheon meeting and auction to be held at the Briarwood Country Club in Sun City West. Please see the articles in this issue for more details on these important events.

And, as directed by our bylaws, featured in this issue of The Voter are the nominations for the LWV/NWMC Board of Directors for 2015-16. Thanks to Diane Smith and her nominating team and our members who have volunteered their services for next year and beyond.

Now, for some well-deserved thank-you's. First, to John and Joye Kohl for their excellent White Paper: "Exploring K-12 Education in Arizona," which lays out in very clear language the issues in a systematic way, exploring the intentions and consequences, intended and unintended, of participants in education decision-making. It's available on our website: lwvVotes.com. Also, thanks to the Kohls for bringing us the West Valley Education Forum featuring keynote speaker, Amy Kobeta, Vice President of the Children's Action Alliance (CAA), "*Questions/ Answers about Arizona's Budget & Taxes.*"

And thanks to Patty Lange for hosting the February Unit Meeting at her home, and to the Kohls for leading the discussion. Also thanks to Lois Brechner for hosting the upcoming March 10 meeting, and to Bonnie Boyce-Wilson for arranging the discussion on Human Trafficking.

Jean Darnell, President – 2013-15

Contact your legislator for a consumer protection law

The effort to expose Arizona's lack of consumer protection laws at the January 22 community presentation has taken off like a rocket -- thanks to the efforts of Colleen Fogarty and Diane Smith. Two area legislators are investigating the possibilities of a consumer protection law. Rep. Phil Lovas and State Sen. Judy Burges have agreed to look into and support a protection bill. "I truly anticipated a six-year struggle before this could ever happen," said Colleen Fogarty, co-organizer of January's Consumer Protection Forum.

"This effort is in the infancy stage; nothing has been formally submitted" Diane Smith said. "But there is a great deal of interest and we will keep the pressure on for this to move forward. Obviously the language has to be hammered out and a source for funding. It is in the right place for consideration, however," she said. The League of Women Voters of Arizona has not studied the issue of consumer protection, therefore the League has no official position on it.

Next efforts will include a state-wide project to garner sufficient legislator votes to carry the bill into law, noted Colleen. "Needless to say, I'll be pestering Diane to guide the way to another miracle: a full blown statute awarding triple damages for every scam."

"It is very important that the members of the various churches that are involved and all citizens contact these legislators by mail, email and/or call their offices to implore them to submit a bill this session to protect AZ consumers," Diane Smith added.

State Rep. Phil Lovas (District 22)

Phone: 602-926-5861

Email: plovas@azleg.gov

State Sen. Judy M. Burges (District 22)

Phone: 602-926-5861

Email: jburges@azleg.gov

Human trafficking topic at March 10 Unit Meeting

Our guest speaker, Sharon Hettick, is a member of Northwest Valley AAUW and has been actively involved in educating the community about human trafficking. She arranged for the screening of the documentary entitled "Tricked" at a local theater and invited expert guest speakers to present during that event. There was good attendance at both showings.

Sharon also has attended the meetings of the Arizona Governor's Human Trafficking Council, which is co-chaired by Cindy McCain and Gil Orrantia. She has been working closely to assist with developing and supporting HB 2553, which has passed Judiciary Committee in the AZ House. She will be presenting on the 16 page report "Exploring the Impact of the Super Bowl on Sex Trafficking 2015."

Plan to bring your brown bag lunch at noon for mingling and conversation at the home of Lois Brechner, and listen to a great speaker at 1 p.m.

-- Bonnie Boyce-Wilson



**League of Women Voters
of NW Maricopa County**

**You're invited to our
annual luncheon meeting & auction
at Briarwood Country Club in Sun City West**

Don't forget to RSVP for our 9:30 a.m., Thursday, April 9 annual luncheon meeting in the Patio Room of the Briarwood Country Club. The address is 20800 N. 135th Ave. in Sun City West. In addition to a delicious salad lunch (with cash bar) and our special program, we're again holding a silent auction. The money raised from this event will help support our valuable programs and activities. Lunch will be served promptly at 12 noon after the meeting.

Please clip the form below and mail it with your check for \$21 (includes tip and tax) per person (made payable to the League of Women Voters - NW Maricopa County) to:

Judy Dreskin, Treasurer
(see the LWV/NWMC Membership Directory for address)

The RSVP deadline for this special event is Wednesday, April 1

Luncheon includes: Healthy Sparkle Salad with Grilled Chicken
Rolls with Butter and Cranberry Bread
Ice Cream Brownie Sundae
Coffee or Tea.

Please advise us of any dietary restrictions.

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LWV/ NWMC Annual Luncheon Meeting - April 9, 2015

Name(s): _____ Phone _____

**Make your \$21 check payable to League of Women Voters – NW Maricopa County
Return by Wednesday, April 1, 2015**

Submit nominations for the “You Make a Difference” Award

The *You Make a Difference Award* is an honor given to an LWV/NWMC member who has made notable contributions to the League. The Award will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the LWV/NWMC on Thursday, April 9.

Please forward your nomination with some specific reasons for your choice by March 15. This very special honor deserves your thought and consideration; all nominations will be reviewed by the committee of past honorees. Previous winners are not eligible for the award again (check your directory for the list.).

Your nomination must be in written form and must include your name, even though all nominations will be kept confidential. Please e-mail nominations to Valerie Ellien (see membership directory for address).

Silent auction at LWV/NWMC Annual Meeting

We plan to have a Silent Auction at the LWV/NWMC Annual Meeting again this year. Last year we made about \$750 for our bank account from selling these items.

Please look around your house for really nice items to sell. Do you have a craft, such as knitting, crocheting, weaving, sewing, woodworking, ceramics, cooking? Do you like to make gift baskets? Do you have a favorite store or restaurant that will give us a donated meal or special item? Would you like to have other members over for a special meal, wine-tasting, chocolate-tasting? Would you like to offer to make cookies, cakes, or other pastries for members in the future?

As soon as you can, tell us what you can do. Take your items to the home of either Jean Darnell or Bonnie Saunders, whichever is easier for you. Thanks!

-- Bonnie Saunders

LWV/NWMC nominating slate for the next League year

President -- Bonnie Saunders (2015-2017)

1st VP -- Bonnie Boyce-Wilson (2015-2017)

Treasurer -- Judy Dreskin (2015-2017)

Director -- Carol Mattoon (2015-2017)

Director -- Jeana Petersen (2015-2017)

Nominating Committee Chair -- Diane Smith (2015-2016)

Nominating Committee Member -- Deanna Denver (2015-2016)

Respectfully submitted: **Diane Smith, Chair**
 Committee: Sharon Forbes, Bonnie Saunders, Rita Young

March 26th LWV-NMC General Membership Meeting

Several Organizations Team Up for Forum -- Maricopa & Yavapai County Election Officials will discuss ways to reach voters

"Election Protection/Creative Solutions for Increasing and Sustaining Voter Participation"

9:30-11:00 a.m., at the Dysart Unified School District
Nathaniel Dysart Education Center, Main Conference Room
15802 North Parkview Place, Surprise

PLEASE NOTE THIS CHANGE OF LOCATION!

WOW, is this exciting or what?!?! We have 18 co-sponsors for the community-wide forum our League is hosting on ways to increase voter participation in elections (see list below). The co-sponsors include educational and religious organizations, government entities, Democrats and Republicans, and more! Please plan on attending and making our guests feel very welcome

Partnering and working with Dysart School and the City of Surprise is a total pleasure as they are extremely supportive and helpful. This partnership has helped expand the scope of the project to even include a contest for high school students to design an artistic, compelling book mark with a catchy message that encourages everyone to vote. The goal of the contest is to generate interest and enthusiasm among students about the importance of registering and voting. And...we put this component together in less than one week!

We are honored to have as our speakers Maricopa County Recorder Helen Purcell, Yavapai County Recorder Leslie Hoffman and Election Director Lynn Constabile, plus other notables thrown in. It will be a packed-full meeting and should be wonderfully educational!

The program will feature information on how county election officials are working to ensure that voters have more information on how to participate in elections, new voting technologies, and practical solutions to allow voters to participate easily and conveniently. They will showcase creative and innovative programs that have been or will be implemented in two counties in Arizona to increase/facilitate voter participation.

Our program will hopefully be a positive step in constructively countering the voter suppression laws that are being passed across the U.S. which make it more difficult for some to vote. By sharing information and ideas, we hope to stimulate all of us into thinking

about what additional cutting-edge, imaginative types of programs can be incorporated to increase accessibility and ease of voting. Democracy depends on citizen participation, and voting is a very important and basic aspect of that involvement!

Helen Purcell was elected Maricopa County Recorder in 1988 and is now serving her 7th term. She has received the National Kids Voting Excellence Award, served on the Board of Advisors for the U.S. Election Assistance Commission where she helped develop draft standards for all U.S. voting systems. In 2010, the National Association of County Recorders and Clerks named her public official of the year. Under her leadership, the Recorder's office has received many achievement awards for Digital Recording and use of the Internet in the redistricting process.

Ms. Hoffman and Ms. Constabile are innovators who have developed, and incorporated, unique, successful, voting programs and policies in Yavapai County to increase voter registration and facilitate ease of voting. They have thought outside the box and made voting more attainable. They will educate us about many of the cutting-edge things they have successfully implemented, explaining what works and how they did it.

For instance, Yavapai County was one of two counties in Arizona to make the switch for the 2012 elections to multiple Voting Centers where voters from all districts can vote, allowing every voter in Yavapai County to choose where they vote on Election Day, compared to traditional precinct-based voting which required voters to go to an assigned polling place to vote. Ballots from every precinct are available at every voting center location and are printed "on demand" for each voter. They also have educational programs they take to the schools to engage students, and a travel board that goes to assisted and independent living facilities as well as nursing homes throughout the county to register voters and update information on existing registrants. Once the early voting period begins, they return enabling them to cast their ballot. This service allows those who face the challenges of transportation an opportunity to vote.

Following the meeting, attendees are invited to stay to discuss and brainstorm ways we could continue to facilitate accessibility and ease of voting, and thus increase voter participation.

ADDENDUM

To give you a little background on how this up-coming meeting came about:

On April 26, 2014, five of our League members attended an extremely informative and stimulating American Bar Association Town Hall (ABA) meeting in Tempe on Election Reform, one of 5 held across the U.S. This meeting led to brainstorming about what we could constructively do as a local organization in regards to Election Reform/Voter Enablement. We became excited about the possibility of having a community-wide meeting on the topic. Those of us who attended the meeting came away enthused & inspired, and we hope that will be the outcome of this program.

To give you a little background on "Restrictive Voter Access Legislation" efforts:

In a Democracy, citizens should be encouraged to vote and policies put in place to facilitate voting. However, recently, in states across our nation, legislation has been introduced and laws have been enacted to suppress the vote of many, trying to make it more difficult to vote, by imposing a host of policies to make voting inconvenient or extremely difficult. Because elections are locally administered in the United States, voter accessibility policies vary among jurisdictions.

Some of the restrictions include:

- limiting the acceptable forms of identification
- reducing hours and/or number of days allowed for early voting
- ending opportunities for students to vote at their college residency
- fewer precincts and an inadequate number of voting machines in minority areas resulting in long lines on election day,
- massive purging of voters from the rolls
- increased regulation of voter registration drives
- increased restrictions on felony voting, etc.

These laws affect and burden young students who are away at college, seniors, people of color, and low-income and minority voters who lack acceptable forms of identification. These groups often do not have photo identification, or immediate access to, or the money needed to secure a birth certificate, if one exists at all (the elderly who were born in the south often have no official birth certificate, it was merely recorded in a Bible), or the time needed or means of transportation to travel to the state office to pay for a birth certificate, or a computer to do the transaction online. Many, like students, the elderly, and the poor do not have transportation to get to voting sites when they are re-located a long distance from their residency. All this affects voter participation and turnout.

At the founding of the country, most states limited the right to vote to property-owning white males. Over time, the right to vote was formally granted to racial minorities, women, and youth. However, throughout the latter 19th and early 20th centuries, Southern states passed [Jim Crow laws](#) to suppress poor and racial minority voters; among other things, such laws included [poll taxes](#), [literacy tests](#), and [grandfather clauses](#). Most of these tactics were made illegal after the enactment of the [Voting Rights Act of 1965](#).

However, new Restrictive Voter Access Legislation (RVAL) is now being implemented. Research has shown that tactics to depress voter turnout have become an integral part of elections in the USA. When political entities advocate for such policies, they typically use positive language such as "voter security" and "anti-voter fraud," to justify their actions; but there is little evidence to prove that voter fraud is a significant problem in the United States. One might even say a new poll tax has been implemented considering that a person must spend money to purchase a copy of their birth certificate or a picture ID from the Secretary of State. If a low-income person has to choose between buying food, medicine, pay rent for

their survival, or buy a birth certificate or picture ID so they can vote; I'm betting the necessities take precedence.

Regretfully, voter restrictions and limited accessibility efforts played a crucial role in driving voter turnout to historic lows in 2014. The League of Women Voters, on the national, state and local level, tries to make a difference by increasing voter education and involvement in elections in a variety of ways. This program is one.

Program Co-Sponsors

Independent Newspapers

Dysart Unified School District

City of Surprise

City of El Mirage

AAUW: Northwest Valley Branch & AAUW of Arizona

LWV: Metro Phoenix LWV and LWVAZ

NOW: Sun Cities\West Valley

Arizona Clean Elections Commission

Adult Education Program of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Surprise

Sun City Grand Republican Interest Group

Democratic Interest Groups: NW Valley, SC Grand Democrats, and Legislative District 22

Arizona Advocacy Network

YES for Dysart Children

The Area Ministerial Association

Car Pool

If you would like to car pool from the UU Church to Dysart for the March 26th meeting, please contact Bonnie Saunders.

Bookmark Contest for Dysart High School Student

In preparation for the upcoming community-wide meeting on March 26, 2015, entitled "*Election Protection/Creative Solutions for Increasing and Sustaining Voter Participation*," the sponsors* are holding a contest for high school students to create an artistic, compelling bookmark that encourages everyone to vote. The goal of the contest is to generate interest, awareness & enthusiasm among students about the importance of voting.

Requirements for front of bookmark:

- Must be artistic, compelling, and visually appealing
- Message must relay the importance of registering to vote and voting
- Message/tagline must be brief, memorable, and "catchy"
- Goal and intention of bookmark/cause is evident
- Bookmark must be 2.5 inches by 8 inches

- It can be in color or black and white
- Include student signature ~ designed by....

Rewards:

- The first-place winner will receive \$100; 2nd place winner receives \$50, and \$25.00 for third place.
- The first, second and third place winners will be recognized at the March 26th, 2015 meeting
- Students and their winning entries will be highlighted on Dysart's website, be featured in an article in The Independent newspaper and in the City of Surprise Progress Magazine
- Their works of art will be on display at the City of Surprise City Hall, City of El Mirage City Hall, Northwest Regional Library, and Dysart Administration Offices
- The winning tagline will be used in advertising for future elections for City of Surprise, City of El Mirage, and the Dysart School District.

Submission Deadline:

All bookmarks need to be submitted electronically to suncityarizona@yahoo.com by Friday, 5:00 p.m., March 13, 2015

Eligibility Requirement:

Any Dysart Unified School District high school student

Note: Backside of book mark will have the website address of where to register to vote and logos of sponsoring organizations.

***Sponsors:** Dysart Unified School District, the League of Women Voters of NW Maricopa County, the City of Surprise, and the City of El Mirage

LWVNWMC Garage Sale - Saturday, March 21

For the past decade or more, I have invited League members to bring "stuff" they wish to donate to the Coyote Lakes-wide community garage sale. Before you bring your "stuff," however, be sure to e-mail me to make sure I am home -- Monday, Tuesday and Friday will be the best days. Acceptable items include books, clothes, household items, jewelry, trinkets, handmade things, yarn, fabric, furniture, electronic items, small appliances, and odds and ends. I will need two or three helpers for each of the two parts of the sale: 1) setup is about 6:30 a.m. through about 9 a.m.; 2) 9 a.m. through cleanup up, about 11:30 a.m. Anyone who can help for any part of these time frames, please e-mail me as soon as you know.

-- Bonnie Saunders

LWV/ NWMC website: lwvVotes.com

Send information to The Voter by the 27th of each month in order to get your information into the next newsletter edition. Contact Rita Young, news editor, at rita44@hotmail.com with any questions.