



Calendar and Comments

November 2013

Right To Die: The Next Civil Rights Movement?

by Margot Champagne

At both the Phoenix and Scottsdale Team meetings in October the topic for discussion was the "death with dignity" movement, and speakers involved with the group "Compassion and Choices Arizona" led the way.

Compassion and Choices' state President, Freda Anderson, spoke to the Phoenix group, and League member Margot Champagne spoke to Scottsdale folks. Both began by describing the history of the medical aid-in-dying movement starting with the Hemlock Society in 1980, moving through the publishing of the book "Final Exit" (now with a supplement) and on into the present. The U.S. Supreme Court has considered the issue to be under state control.

Four states (Oregon, Washington, Montana and recently this year, Vermont) now permit a terminally ill, medically competent adult to obtain a prescription to "hasten death" (which is the term preferred by Compassion and Choices). All of them use the Oregon law as their model. Two physicians must find that the patient, in all probability, has less than 6 months to live. After the patient requests the medication, in writing, he must undergo a waiting period. He must be able to administer the medication himself without help from any other person. This provision, therefore, excludes some patients such as late-stage ALS patients, from qualifying for the prescription.

Freda and Margot explained that Oregon and Washington brought their laws into effect by ballot initiative. Montana's law came into effect by a state supreme court decision and Vermont followed as the only state to enact its law legislatively. Last year, a ballot initiative in Massachusetts failed 49% to 51%. By early this year, 8 states had bills pending in their legislatures based on the Oregon model. A similar bill submitted several times in Arizona was not successful but those efforts were not recent. Margot noted that the issue did not seem to be a "conservative v. liberal" one per se. Opponents

are primarily those opposed for religious purposes, and some advocates of the disabled fear a slippery slope/euthanasia effect.

Much of Freda's presentation showed how the law is working in Oregon. The annual report on the law by the state's health department showed that the number of people using the law is not a great as it might be expected when looking at the number of deaths there. Most are cancer patients and most are already in hospice care, which is known to be the best environment for pain medication.



Both presentations included a lively Q & A with League members. Margot suggested that families use occasions when extended family is all together, such as Thanksgiving, to hear from the elders what their "death and dying" wishes are. She noted that about 70% of Advanced Directives are not adhered to because of disagreements between family members.

Meanwhile, a committee of LWVAZ is working on a White Paper on this topic. A White Paper is a League study that is less than a formal study and does not of itself lead to League taking a position on an issue. The paper will be submitted to the League's state board on November 9th.

New Book for Metro Phoenix Book Group!

To be discussed: **Thursday, January 9, 2014**

Marge Thornton's home, 400 E. Alameda, Tempe (For directions, call 480-966-6053. We begin the discussion over brown bag lunches (bring your own), so don't dally!



The Book Group's new read is Mark Leibovich's "This Town - Two Parties and a Funeral", described by David Weigel in "Slate" as "hopeless and very funny." It concerns the bad and the ugly -- and the good if you can find it -- in the D.C. political scene.

If you enjoyed "The President's Club", you will also like this selection. Watch for any updates in the January *C&C*. Contact Karen Michael with questions: 480-802-0588



Calendar

The Democracy We COULD Have: From Suffrage to Real Equality

November 5th, from 6:30 to 8:30

Scottsdale Community College

Co-sponsors are Scottsdale Community Group and the SCC student group IKONS

Co-hosts include AAUW, BPW, NCJW, NOW, UniteWomen, YWCA

Turquoise Room

(west section of the Student Center)

Use Entrance #1, Parking Lot A

Look for sandwich board signs

Panelists are:

Andie Levien, lead editor of the report

Eric Ehst, League member and former president of AZ NOW

Lilia Alvarez, who ran for Maricopa County Supervisor in District 3 in 2012

The discussion will focus on why there are few women in office compared to their voting numbers, and three suggested remedies. One of those is to encourage multi-member districts with proportional representation, important goals for League.

Save the Date!

Thursday, December 12th

Holiday Luncheon

for all League Members

Sponsored by the Phoenix Team

To be held at The Terraces, 16th Street and Northern

Food, speaker -- More details to come



East Valley Team

Meets at Marge Thornton's home, 400 E. Alameda, Tempe.
Bring your brown bag lunch! For directions, call 480-966-6053.

November 21, Thursday, 11:30 am

Topic: Maricopa County Government Study. The team will work on educational materials and possible consensus questions.

Phoenix Team

Meet at The Terraces, Monaco Room, 7550 N 16th St, Phoenix, 85020
(park off of Morten Ave. south of Northern), 602-906-4024

November 13, Wednesday, 10 to 11 am

9:30 a.m. coffee, snacks

Topic: League Agriculture Study--background and update.
Speaker will be League member Kari Nienstedt.

Scottsdale Team

Will meet again in January, time, topic and date TBA

Contact: Kathy Schwarz, 480-946-6013.

Help Observe Human Rights Day

The United Nations Association will observe Human Rights Day on **December 7** with a **brunch** at the home of Dave and Kathy Schwarz. **Representative John Mendez**, a long-time member of the UNA and active participant in Model UN as a college student, will be the speaker. We look forward to honoring the day, the UNA and the work of Representative Mendez. Members and non-members are invited to attend.

December 7

10:00 AM

Dave and Kathy Schwarz home

5901 E Vernon, Scottsdale

RSVP: 480-946-6103 or kndschwarz@cox.net

Of Note: LWVMP has become a member of the Inter-Club Council of Arizona. ICC has been around almost as long as our local League, and is essentially a networking group. The group meets 5 times a year.

Update on O'Connor House/SpeakOut Arizona

submitted by Maureen Schmid

Elva Coor is stepping down as chair of SpeakOut AZ (speakoutaz.org) and on November 1st, SpeakOut is rolling together with a group called Arizona Deliberates. A period of six months will be spent working out the details. Here is AZ Deliberates' statement of their goals:

Arizona Deliberates is a collaboration between Maricopa Community College's Center for Civic Participation, Northern Arizona University's Project for Political Deliberation, and Our Family Services' Center for Community Dialogue. Our purpose is to coordinate statewide community deliberation forums to reach policy consensus and recommendations. We serve as a technical assistance network for practices related to public engagement, community dialogue and deliberation, and provide a common statewide platform for [National Issues Forum](#) deliberations.

O'Connor House will continue to support iCivics, but will be working with the League of Women Voters to focus on "The Great Voter Challenge." Voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout are the three areas of focus. One thing that will service voter registration: special icons will appear on the servicearizona.gov website as well as many other websites with links to the forms needed to sign up.

Two other announcements were made:

- A free training program on civil discourse and leading meetings will be 9 - 3 p.m. at Prescott College on Saturday, Nov. 23. To register, email Julie@oconnorhouse.org.
- On Monday, Nov. 25, a SpeakOut AZ celebration will be held to thank Elva from 2-5 p.m. at the AZ Community Foundation building, 2201 E. Camelback, 4th floor (signs will be up on the 4th fl.) The featured speaker will be Dr. Lattie Coor; special guest - Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

LWVMP Endorses "Complete Streets"



It is expected that this fall, the Phoenix City Council will vote on a Complete Streets policy, which will ensure that streets are intentionally designed and built to provide safe access and use for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and public transit riders of all ages

and abilities. This type of policy jives well with League's positions on transportation and urban and environmental health. [Click to see pamphlet here.](#)

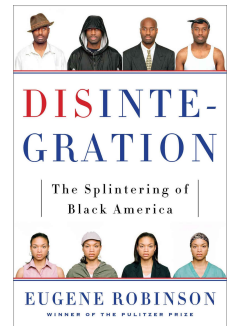
Therefore, LWVMP has agreed to endorse--at Arizona PIRG's request--the "Complete Streets" campaign. PIRG (Public Interest Research Group) is involved with the Phoenix Complete Streets Working Group, and wants to show Phoenix city officials that there is broad public support for a Complete Streets policy.

If you'd like to get more involved, you might consider coming to a public hearing. PIRG will gladly provide talking points, help you prepare to make comments, and keep you posted on upcoming dates. Contact Serena Unrein at sunrein@arizonapirg.org or 602-252-1184.

Disintegrated and Abandoned

Thoughts from Dave MacDonald, upon reading the book "Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America".

"The abandoned" are already a black underclass being joined now by Hispanics. On international tests of students' reasoning abilities, U.S. students on average are among the lesser achievers among developed nations. But when the data are disaggregated, whites do very well. Blacks and Hispanics do very poorly, so the average is misleading.



Common Core standards help to set the bar realistically for flourishing in the global arena, but locals get to decide how to reach the standards! *They* decide on curriculum--how to teach, what to teach, when. It will be interesting to see how diligent the states are in shining the light on what's getting done well and not so well.

But it isn't just education that's critical. It's also getting jobs, and achieving a minimal but living wage. Do you know what a living wage is (for key demographic groups in your town)? I doubt it. The data are almost impossible to find, yet 70% of our economy, our GDP, depends upon consumer demand, and median wages have remained flat since the 1970's. However, costs have risen hugely. The mainstream is being stranded, the poor--especially blacks--are abandoned.

Speaking of disintegration, many blacks--proportionately large numbers of "them"--have been jailed, imprisoned, incarcerated. What minimum/living wage jobs can they expect? Frequently, they can't even vote, can't even help get minimum wage levels raised.

Multi-generational poverty, multi-generational incarceration--yes, they go on. The need for greater understanding; and wise, hard love; and aware compassion--all appear to be essential. Really, what's going on here? I'm looking for answers. Are you? Let's share.