

Calendar and Comments

March 2014

Wonderful Presentation on Guardian Review Program

We've been hearing so much lately about Child Protective Services and its failure to respond to the 6,000 uninvestigated reports of child abuse in Arizona. So at the Phoenix Team's monthly meeting in February, the first question posed to Leticia Rios, Coordinator of the Guardian Review Program (GRP), was how the two agencies are related. She was quick to respond that GRP is an entirely different program from CPS and under the Maricopa County Superior Court. Rather than respond to abuse reports, GRP is a system for checking up on the care that is being given by court appointed guardians to their wards.

The Guardian Review Program arranges for vulnerable wards to be visited in person to ensure that the designated guardian is adequately overseeing the health and safety of the ward. Wards include frail, elderly persons as well as young adults with developmental disabilities. Where a family member or friend does not step forward to volunteer to be a guardian, the state assigns a government paid guardian.

Leticia Rios is the only full time paid administrator dedicated to a 6,000+ caseload! She supervises approximately 20 volunteers (Court Visitors), assigns cases, reads through the 500 or so monthly reports submitted by the volunteers, does field work visits personally, helps get out the program's newsletter, as well as a dozen other tasks. Funds for the program come from the Maricopa County Superior Court budget and are not mandated. Leticia explained the history of the program, its current organization and goals, starting from when a petition for guardianship is submitted up to a review that may result in a hearing with change of guardian if a visit finds neglect. She explained the division of authority with other agencies such as Adult Protection, Department of Developmental Disability, and others. Her immediate supervisor, Jeremy Mullens--who also supervises 5 investigators--accompanied her and helped with some of the questions such as the difference between Power of Attorney and Guardianship (the latter trumps the former).

League members attending the meeting actively participated in the discussions and peppered the speakers with many substantive questions. Most attending had not known of the program, one of only approximately 10 in the United States.

Call to Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 26

LWV Office, 4423 N. 24th Street, #A, Phoenix

9:30 am refreshments

10:00 - 12:30 Welcome, Speaker, Business Meeting

This is the LWVMP's annual business meeting, in which officers are elected, bylaws' changes are made, and other important business discussed.

Speaker: Eric Ehst

**"Top Two is coming back!
AZ voters can't keep a bad idea down!"**

Tell us what you need, tell us what you want!
Volunteer to be an officer? (See following page.)

Maricopa County Government Position Recommendation

As a result of its several-year study of Maricopa County government, the East Valley Team recommends the retention of the current LWVMP position in support of Charter Home rule, with the inclusion of the steps specified in the State Constitutional requirements. We submit the following wording for the position, to be voted upon at upcoming LWVMP Annual Meeting in April.

"The League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Phoenix supports charter home rule for Maricopa County."

"As defined in the Arizona Constitution, an elected charter committee is required to compose a proposed charter. Maricopa County voters would then vote on the proposed charter as well as appointment vs. election of row officers and taxation as additional and separate questions."

Many people have little understanding of County government. The East Valley Team plans to focus on educational presentations next year as a way help remedy this problem.

THE LWVMP NEEDS YOU TO STEP UP NOW!!!!

We need people to fill a number of Administrative Team positions for the coming one or two years. We realize training will be needed, and we promise to provide that.

If interested in (or even willing to consider) serving, please contact one of these people:
Kathy Schwarz -- kndschwarz@cox.net or 480-946-6103
Rivko Knox -- bvaandr@earthlink.net or 602-942-6436
Jeanine Starrett -- colbygal28@yahoo.com or 602-544-5537

If we don't hear from enough folks, we'll come looking for YOU!!!

Open positions and job duties are as follows:

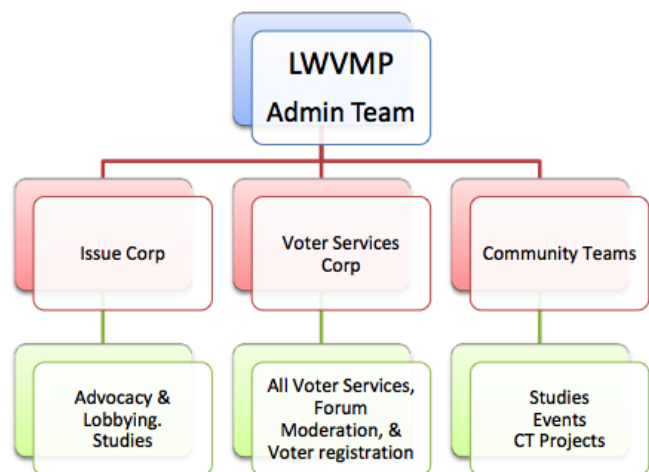
Membership Chair (2014-2015)
Voter Service Corps Chair (2014-2015)
Liaison: (2014-2016)
Communications Chair (2014-2016)
Nominations Committee -- 3 people (2014-2015)

(FYI, Rivko Knox will fulfill her second year as Secretary; Lucy Kahlstrom has agreed to serve another term as Treasurer; and Eleanor Eisenberg and Barbara Robertson have agreed to a term as co-chairs for the Issues Corps)

THE LWVMP Organizational Diagram looks like this:

The Administrative Team

The Ad Team takes care of required corporate administrative duties; conducts trainings as needed (moderator, observer corp, etc.); is responsible for coordinating the Program Planning general meeting with Teams, and the Annual business meeting; oversees the office manager's position; and provides basic oversight and/or coordination of LWVMP activities. At least one or more members of the Ad Team serve on the Bylaws Committee and Nominations Committee.



The Ad Team meets monthly except in July, sometimes via phone conferencing. The Ad Team is striving to reduce the number and/or length of meetings in the coming year.

Membership Chair Duties: The Membership Chair will meet with and orient new/prospective members, and help mentor and involve them with current members and projects. Follow-up, follow-up and follow-up. Administrative duties (e.g. keeping up the list of members for us and for national database, sending out membership letters, etc.) would NOT be the responsibility of this person, but rather the office manager. WE ARE ALL RESPONSIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP--i.e., we must *ask* people to join the League.

Voter Services Chair Duties: The Voter Services Chair will form a team to develop yearly goals for voter education and registration, e.g. register voters, provide information on ballot issues, conduct or moderate candidate forums, and provide education in areas of need/interest (outside of issues corp).

Liaison Duties: The Liaison will attend 4 yearly State Board meetings, follow National League news as time allows, have program planning oversight* and be the 'voice' of LWVMP *if and when* one is needed outside of a particular issue. (The Liaison will *not* be left holding the bag for all spokesperson activities, as 'ISSUE' corp would do most of this. There will *rarely* be times the Liaison must be spokesperson for LWVMP – aside from providing information on LWVMP activities at the State board meeting.)

*Program planning oversight means understanding and communicating the program planning (position development) process to those who will present program changes or new program ideas at the annual program planning meeting; altering deadlines/timeframes as necessary, and making sure the appropriate agenda is in place for that meeting. (This will NOT demand the office holder plan the whole meeting, which is for interested members to do.)

Communications Chair Duties: The Communications Chair will use social networks to communicate League activities/events/positions to League members, the public, and media. The Chair will update the website in conjunction with the office manager. While the Office Manager (partly paid for by the State) may do E-Blasts for state, the Communications Chair will help with the LWVMP C&C (our newsletter, Comments & Calendar). This person will keep a list of local media; try to get our events on calendars and send out PR to newspaper. This person would then also be the contact for same.

THANK YOU !!

From State President Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer

Thank you for making your voices heard in urging Gov. Brewer to veto SB1062! Your voices were heard via over 40,000 emails and phone calls to the Governor along with the voices of numerous elected officials and businesses – large and small! Your voices did make a difference!! Politicians know that every email sent represented 10 additional voices who agreed but don't speak out in opposition to this divisive bill!



Calendar

***Please don't forget to note General Meeting information next page.**

Anyone is welcome to attend ANY Team meeting!

East Valley Team

Meets at the home of Marge Thornton, 400 E. Alameda, Tempe.

Bring a brown bag lunch.

Contact: Marge, 480-966-6053

Thursday, March 20, 2014

11:30 a.m.

Topic: Another look at the agriculture position update, with a quick peak at the consensus questions.

Phoenix Team

Meets at The Terraces, Monaco Room, 7550 N 16th St, Phoenix 85020

(park off of Morten Ave. south of Northern and west of 16th St.), 602-906-4024

Contact: Barbara Robertson, 602-867-0715

Wednesday, March 12th

9:30 a.m. coffee, snacks 10 to 11 am

Topic: Being discussed at press time. :) Stay tuned for separate email.

Scottsdale Team

Will meet at Scottsdale Congregational Church (which has screens and projector)

4425 N. Granite Reef, Scottsdale (Just south of Camelback Road)

Contact: Kathy Schwarz, 480-946-6013 or Alice Stambaugh, 480-947-2095

Date and Time being discussed at press time. Stay tuned!

Showing Movie: *Inequality for All--A Passionate Argument on Behalf of the Middle Class*
Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich makes an eloquent and impassioned argument about how the devastating effects of America's widening income inequality not only threaten the middle class but also the very foundation of democracy itself.

"Mr. Reich ties together his talking points with a reasonable-sounding analysis and an unassuming warmth sometimes absent from documentaries charting America's economic woes." – Nicolas Rapold, *New York Times*

"He's so accessible and entertaining he takes a subject that sounds soporific and makes it come alive like you wouldn't believe" – Kenneth Turan, *Los Angeles Times*

**** Metro Phoenix Book Group! ****

Submitted by Karen Michael.

Thursday, March 27

11:30 am "The Invention of Wings", by Sue Monk Kidd

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!



Sue Monk Kidd's "The Invention of Wings" was voted as the 'read' for March by group members -- a good choice for Women's History month (March) as well as Black History month (February). We will also be discussing what the focus of our group should be. Please join us! For further information, call Karen Michael at 480-802-0588 or email her at: Karanddic@wbhsi.net

Online Voter Registration: Improving Access to Voting

This blog post was originally posted on LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara's [Huffington Post blog](#).



We're only a matter of weeks into 2014, but there have already been promising developments to fix our nation's elections system and make it easier to register to vote. By the beginning of 2014, [at least 21 states](#) had established or were in the process of establishing online voter registration systems. This means that 100 million, or nearly 50 percent of, all eligible voters in the nation will live in states that provide this easy and convenient way to register to vote. According to [new research by the Pew Charitable Trusts](#), online voter registration provides great benefits for voters and election workers alike. The benefits of online registration are so great, in fact, that the bipartisan Presidential Commission on Election Administration (PCEA) has taken notice. In January, [the PCEA released a report](#) recommending that states adopt online registration.

Online voter registration is a critical step to bringing our voting systems into the 21st century; however, most of the systems implemented thus far leave out a significant and important part of the population -- citizens who don't have a driver's license or non-driver's ID. The League is committed to ensuring that every eligible voter can register and update their registration through online systems.

Why We Need Secure Online Voter Registration

Secure online voter registration is one of [five key election administration reforms](#) that the League believes are critical to making our elections as free, fair and accessible as possible. Pew's study confirms that online registration saves taxpayer dollars, increases the accuracy of voter rolls and provides an easy and convenient option for citizens who need to register to vote or update their information. Pew found that online voter registration increases voter satisfaction, with polling data showing that 65 percent of registered voters support allowing online voter registration -- likely due to the system's ease and convenience. Online voter registration also decreases the administrative burden caused by the need for officials to re-enter information from handwritten forms and eliminates the risk of transcription errors.



Improving Current Online Voter Registration Systems

The League is encouraged that states are increasingly updating their elections processes to meet the needs of our modern, mobile society. However, we must ensure that advancements in our voting systems apply to all eligible voters. Currently, almost every state with online voter registration requires that voters who use the system possess a driver's license or a state-issued ID card with a signature on file. As a result, [millions of eligible voters who lack driver's licenses or state-issued IDs](#) are unable to use the system. For example, young people are much less likely than the general population to have a driver's license - and young people are also much less likely to be registered to vote! What's more, there are [strong economic and racial divides in Internet usage and access](#). These circumstances raise concerns about voter discrimination, as those locked out of the current online voter registration systems overwhelmingly tend to include low-income, minority, elderly and disabled individuals.

What Can We Do?

The League is committed to ensuring that elections are free, fair and accessible, meaning that all eligible voters have equal access to the ballot, including minorities, the elderly, women, low-income individuals, young people and people with disabilities. We believe that online voter registration systems should not be contingent upon an individual's possession of a driver's license or state-issued ID, or ready access to the Internet. It's critical that these systems are designed to be equally available to all eligible voters, and that states work to help mitigate the impact of a system that relies on access to computers and the Internet.

One way to increase the accessibility of online voter registration is to utilize existing technology to capture and accept an electronic version of the registrant's signature. This option would enable voters both to register online and provide a signature to complete the registration process instantaneously. In addition, the use of mobile devices like tablets and smartphones would not only directly increase voting access, but it would also enable organizations that conduct voter registration drives, [like the League](#), to incorporate mobile devices into their efforts and help mitigate the problem of uneven access to computers and the Internet.

Online voter registration could also streamline the elections process for government public assistance agencies, which are already required by the [National Voter Registration Act](#) (NVRA) to offer clients who are eligible voters the opportunity to register to vote. Providing online registration at government public assistance agencies allows clients -- who are often low-income individuals or people with disabilities, populations that might lack either a current driver's license or stable access to the Internet -- the ability to register to vote both easily and instantaneously.

Additionally, states should enable eligible voters to attest that the information they enter online is accurate by using a computerized mark, similar to the way in which Internet users can "sign" contracts, credit card invoices, banking and other transactions online. These voters could then be required to provide a "wet" signature or an image of a written signature when they visit a polling place for the first time. This method is similar to the [Help America Vote Act's](#) (HAVA) requirement that first-time voters present identification at the polls if they have not done so when registering by mail.

Finally, the League recognizes that many individuals have out-of-date voter registration records, often due to recent changes of address or changes in their name, [including from marriage or divorce](#). The League believes that an efficient online registration system must also give individuals the option to update their voter registration record to reflect changes. We are, after all, a very mobile society, and updating addresses online would significantly improve the accuracy of voter registration lists.

The League is encouraged that states across the country are increasingly implementing online registration systems, and that both the Pew study and the PCEA recommendations reinforce the many benefits of online voter registration. We hope that the remaining states will consider updating their registration process to include online opportunities for all and that those with systems in place will update their systems so every eligible voter can benefit equally. Leagues across the country will continue to work to ensure that no eligible citizen is left behind.

The voting process should be as easy and accessible as possible, so that all eligible citizens are able to register and cast their ballots. Secure online voter registration is a crucial, common sense step in modernizing our nation's voting system, and we're committed to making sure it is available to all eligible voters.