

December 2016



THE VOTER

The League of Women Voters Kansas City/Jackson/Clay/Platte Counties

www.lwvkc.org – email. lwvkcjcp@gmail.com

816-464-1800

Join us for our Holiday Lunch and Meeting

DECEMBER 17, 2016

OUR SPEAKER WILL BE

DAVE HELLING, “*THE KANSAS CITY STAR*”

9:30 a.m. – gathering and coffee

10:00 a.m. – program begins with Mr. Helling

11:30 a.m. lunch

Catered by Itty Bits of Heaven

Community Christian Church – Centennial Hall (South Side)

Send your check for \$15 (per person) by December 13 at the latest
Caroline Arnold at 1912A NW Cherry Street, Lee’s Summit, MO 64081

Your check is your reservation

If you have a dietary restriction (e.g. vegetarian) let her know

Phone for Caroline: 816 333-6059

DECEMBER 17 MEETING AND HOLIDAY LUNCH – DAVE HELLING, KC STAR

We are fortunate to have Dave Helling, journalist at *The Kansas City Star* as our speaker. Dave has been involved in radio, television and print media since 1977. He came to Kansas City in 1984 as a reporter/anchor for WDAF-TV Kansas City and from 1999-2005 was a reporter/anchor for KCTV-5 Kansas City. In earlier positions, he has been a reporter for the Washington DC Bureau of KARD-TV Wichita, KHGI-TV Kearney, Nebraska, and KHAS Radio, Hastings, Nebraska.

Dave was born in Texas and raised in Overland Park, Kansas. He graduated from Shawnee Mission West High School and is a 1977 graduate of Creighton University, Omaha.

Dave has received several important awards including the Freedom of the Press Award from the ACLU; three Emmy nominations, and he was a Silver medalist at the New York Film Festival. Dave is a Fellow of the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics of the University of Kansas.

At this time, he is a multi-media reporter for *The Kansas City Star*, providing videos for web, as well as regular contributions to the print edition. He produced the “*Truth Watch*” series of stories, examining claims made in political advertising.

Dave has agreed to talk with us about the role of the media in the political process, notably the recent Presidential and key elected leadership campaigns in this region as well as how he sees the role of the media going forward in reporting on the administration that will take office on January 21, 2017.

CO-PRESIDENTS’ MESSAGE - Reflecting on our work in 2016 and looking ahead

We are incredibly thankful for the hard work by our League’s members over the past year. The following are a few of the accomplishments over the past 12 months:

- Our League was a leader in planning and putting on Women’s Equality Week events in August. We co-sponsored, with Alpha Kappa Alpha, a program at the Bruce Watkins Center on “Women’s Equality and Race: Bridging the Gap to Sisterhood” as well as a program on the Kansas side on “Voter Suppression: Kansas and Missouri at the Epicenter.” The latter was co-sponsored with the League of Women Voters of Johnson County, the Mainstream Coalition and Delta Sigma Theta. Journalist Mary Sanchez was our moderator.
- We worked, as a League and with others, in the fight to defeat Amendment 6 to the Missouri Constitution, which will result in new photo voter ID requirements in Missouri. Our efforts included more than 200 hours spent by our numbers on phone banks reaching out to voters to promote the “no” message. We also submitted letters to newspaper editors, appeared on several radio shows, spoke at numerous public events, and wrote and arranged for several radio public service messages.
- We had outstanding speakers at our meetings, including topics such as the Transpacific Partnership Trade Deal; media and the political campaign – applying the principles of “peace

journalism;” The U.S. Supreme Court – Implications of the November Presidential Election; and Issues on the November 2016 Missouri and Kansas City Ballots.

- We participated in the LWVUS study – Money in Politics in which we answered National consensus questions. A presentation on this topic at our December 2015 meeting helped us to answer these questions.
- A fund raiser event in March at the Quality Hill Playhouse, to which we are grateful for their support. A movie night in which we saw “The Suffragette” was held with money chipped in by attendees for “Peggy the Pig.”
- A “Barriers to Voting” project was conducted by a self-initiated group of our members. It addressed some key reasons that result in eligible citizens not voting. The study included meetings with the KCMO Election Board. An informative power point presentation was developed and is available for use by League members and others.
- More than 50 voter registration events were held, including, for the first time, registration sites at Kauffman Stadium at Royals games.
- Our League supported, as a co-sponsor, the October Heartland Coalition against Gun Violence third annual conference on gun violence and its impact on our community. Some of our members stood outside gun shows holding signs advocating “safe gun use” and “background checks” among other things.
- Our League published, for the first time in many years, a 2016 Voters Guide for our area. Approximately \$2,700 in donations helped make this possible. Our League’s team that made this possible spent many hours working on it – enough positive things cannot be said about this effort.
- Candidate and issue forums were held, both north and south of the river. These ranged from school board candidates in KCMO to county commissioner candidates in South Platte County. We also provided a moderator and timekeeper for the annual Platte County breakfast forum for elected officials as well as a speaker at a Northland AAUW forum on Amendment 6. These are just a few examples though which our League contributed to democracy in action in our area.
- LWVKC members participated in LWVMO state level events, including the LWVMO Board and the state-wide meetings as well as the LWVUS National Conference in Washington, DC.

We could go on and on, but time and space limit this recitation. We apologize if we left out something you believe is important. We have done our best to give you a flavor of what has gone on this year. **We are incredibly proud of all of the work done by our League and particularly proud of the relationships that were built with others (e.g. NAACP, CCO, Alpha Kappa Alpha, What U Can Do, the AAUW, the A Philip Randolph Institute, the ACLU and others.**

Now, we need to look toward 2017. The January 21st LWVKC/J/C/P meeting will be focused on planning for the coming year, not only what we, ourselves wish to work on, but what we want to convey to the LWVMO level.

Come to that meeting with your ideas and commitment to do whatever you can to make 2017 as strong a year for our League as we were in 2016.

WOMEN'S MARCH ON WASHINGTON – LWVUS Board POSITION ON PARTICIPATION

A Women's March on Washington, DC is scheduled to occur on Saturday, January 21, 2017.

Referred to, in short, as the WMW is being organized and promoted by a team of "experienced and professional" national organizers. An organizing committee is working on details such as permits from the National Park Service, the Metropolitan Police Department, Capitol Police and Homeland Security. They report that they have a unified rally and march planned. The planners have said that, because this is an ongoing process, they will not share details until they are finalized.

Why is this march being organized? Against the background of the rhetoric of the past election cycle including that has involved insults hurled at various groups (e.g. Muslims, immigrants from some countries, Native Americans, the disabled, women) there is a strong desire to have the presence of women and others in Washington, D.C. that is too large to ignore – on inauguration day. The organizers desire to show on "day one" of the Trump administration that issues of social justice, human rights, equity and respect are too large to be ignored.

Organizations from around the country have been invited to participate in this event.

The LWVUS Board of Directors met in late November to discuss whether the League should participate officially in the Women's March on Washington. The Board considered views of the State Presidents who, in the case of Missouri, had consulted with local Presidents.

After a thorough discussion weighing the pros and cons, the Board decided that LWVUS **will not** officially participate in the Women's march. While believing in the freedom of assembly as a cornerstone of our open democracy and encouraging people across the United States to let their voices be heard, **this decision was made taking into account not only safety but also the fact that the League is non-partisan..**

League members, as individuals, may participate in the March if they wish to do so. LWVUS requests, however that League members do not wear League buttons or carry League signs in the march.

LWVUS will monitor the organization of the event and, if additional information emerges before January 21 that indicates that the event will be a "non-partisan and inclusive event," the LWVUS may reconsider its decision.

Your local Co-Presidents (Donna and Linda) are fully in accord with the LWVUS decision. In addition to not knowing whether this will be non-partisan there are also the practicalities of the huge crowds and scarcity of hotel rooms in the Washington DC area around inauguration day.

LWV MO State Meeting - reported by Margie Richcreek

Saturday, November 12, was sunny and mild in Missouri - a perfect day for a trip to Sedalia for the LWVMO Fall Conference. It took some maneuvering and several cars to get all of us there, but Cheryl, Joyce, Pauline, Donna, Bertie, Evelyn, Margie, Pat, Caroline, and Peg arrived safely and on time. As usual, we and Leaguers from across the state found familiar faces and engaged quickly in lively conversations renewing long time League friendships - the best!

Elaine Blodgett, stalwart of our State League Board and current president, presided with her usual calm but enthusiastic demeanor. She shared the microphone with several others for the following reports and announcements:

- Mary Merritt - State Convention will be April 28 and 29 in Springfield,
- Lael Von Holt - the nominating committee wants to have State Board members from every League. (She told me how pleased she is that KC's Linda Smith and Evelyn Maddox have agreed to be nominees - we are all glad!)
- Leslie Cramer – the role of the newly formed “Visioning Team” is to plan and promote ways in which State Board and local Leagues can work with, support, and encourage each other.
- Linda McDaniel - League's 2017 Legislative Priorities will focus on money in politics/campaign finance with emphasis on being watchful of the implementation of Amendment 2. She added that the next stage for Amendment 6 will be a court case.

Donna Hoch and others representing each local League gave interesting reports of their action throughout the election season.

“Journalism: its role in the election and the future of newspapers,” was Rudy Keller's topic. Being a reporter with the *Columbia Tribune*, he had many statistics, one of which was the fact that there were 5,000,000 fewer Missouri voters in 2016 than in 2008. He also pointed out that most of our newly elected officials are outsiders elected for very important positions, but they have had NO experience in government. This creates a dire need for more reporters in Jefferson City watching and reporting. LWVUS' position on immigration, in part, supports earning citizenship and learning English and does not support deportation. Sedalia Leaguer, Kathleen Boswell, shared her personal experience about a friend's emigrating from Belarus. She observed that this experience was difficult, miserable, expensive, dehumanizing and very lengthy. Her conclusion was that our current immigration system must be reformed.

Representatives of the Springfield League shared a power point (that is available to all Leagues) chock full of good ideas for strengthening our boards and increasing our memberships. Their mantra has been “many hands make like work” and the key to their recent success has been to do more intentional asking and that board members form committees to share the workload.

MEMBERSHIP

We have a number of new members. Here are their names. We apologize if anyone has been left out.

CATHARINE COOPER OF LEE'S SUMMIT

REBEKKAH STUTEVILLE OF PARKVILLE

BETH SCHAFFER OF KANSAS CITY

SUSAN MOON OF KANSAS CITY

LINDA GARLAND OF KANSAS CITY

CARYN HEFFERNAN OF KANSAS CITY

POLLY SWAFFORD OF KANSAS CITY

JACQUELINE (JACQEE) GAFFORD

NEW MEMBER PROFILE – BY CAROLYN WEEKS

EARLY THIS YEAR, “THE JUST OFF BROADWAY THEATRE, LOCATED IN PENN VALLEY PARK, KANSAS CITY, PRESENTED “THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BARBARA JORDON” WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY OUR OWN NEW MEMBER JACQEE GAFFORD AND DIRECTED BY OUR OWN MEMBER FRAN FARAH. THE AUDIENCE HIGHLY PRAISED THE REMARKABLE ONE-WOMAN SHOW AND STAR.

JACQEE ATTENDED GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY, GRADUATING WITH STAGE MANAGEMENT, WRITING AND PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE IN THE THEATRE DEPARTMENT.

JACQEE’ FATHER WAS AN ALL-AMERICAN FULLBACK FROM GRAMBLING AND LATER AND EMPLOYEE OF THE JOB CORP AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IN TEXAS AND WASHINGTON DC. HE OFTEN SPOKE TO JACQEE OF THE FRESHMAN CONGRESSMEN HE WAS OBSERVING WHO COULD COMMAND THE FLOOR OF THE CONGRESS AND, AS HE PUT IT, “KICK BUTT AND TAKE NAMES.” IT WAS UNDER THAT INFLUENCE THAT JACQEE’S ADMIRATION FOR BARBARA JORDON FLOURISHED. THE UNIQUE SPEECH PATTERNS AND CADENCE OF JORDON WERE MESMERIZING TO JACQEE, AND SHE ENJOYED EVERY ASPECT OF PORTRAYING HER.

JACQEE ACKNOWLEDGES THAT HER MOTHER, WHO WAS A TEACHER, HER FATHER, AND EXTENDED FAMILY (MOSTLY GRAMBLING TIGERS) HAVE MOTIVATED HER TO TAKE UP THE BANNER OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND TO USE HER VOICE AND HER ART WHEREVER SHE LIVES. WELCOME JACQEE!

PASSAGES –BY CAROLYN WEEKS

RUTH RAUCH, FORMER PRESIDENT OF LWV EASTERN JACKSON COUNTY, PASSED AWAY IN OCTOBER 2016 AT AGE 94. SHE WAS A WILLIAM JEWELL COLLEGE GRADUATE IN JOURNALISM WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON POLITICAL LANGUAGE. AS A PUBLISHER AND WRITER FOR LOCAL NEWSPAPERS IN INDEPENDENCE SHE USED HER SPECIALTY TO INFORM AND ACTIVATE WHEREVER SHE RECOGNIZED THE NEED. HER INTERESTS WERE BETTER SCHOOLS, GOOD HEALTH PROGRAMS AND CARING COMMUNITIES. HER RESUME WAS LONG AND TELLING. SHE SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE KANSAS CITY SCHOOL BOARD FROM 1990-1994, LOCAL AND STATE LWV BOARDS OF DIRECTORS AND THE NORTHWEST INDEPENDENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL PRESIDENT AND FOUNDING MEMBER.

RUTH WAS AN AMAZING COMMUNITY FORCE. SHE LEFT INDEPENDENCE A BETTER PLACE FOR HAVING BEEN HERE. I LEARNED TO APPRECIATE HER JOVIAL SPIRIT AS A FELLOW EMPLOYEE OF THE CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, WHERE OUR FRIENDSHIP GREW. I HAVE ENDEARINGLY DESCRIBED HER AS A “PIECE OF WORK.” I LOVED HER SCRAPPINESS, RESOLVE AND DETERMINATION.

GUN VIOLENCE - CANDLELIGHT VIGIL ON DECEMBER 14, 2016

The Heartland Coalition Against Gun Violence, of which we are a co-sponsor, and *Moms Demand Action* have invited members of our League to participate in a commemoration of all lives lost to gun violence, in a candlelight vigil on the 4th anniversary of the Sandy Hook tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut.

Brief remarks will commemorate all lives lost to shootings due to suicide, domestic violence, accident, and criminal action.

Participants are encouraged to bring signs to peacefully protest all types of gun violence. Candles will be provided.

WHAT: Candlelight Vigil to Commemorate All Lives Lost to Gun Violence
WHEN: Wednesday, December 14, 5:00 to 7:00 P.M.
WHERE: Mill Creek Park, adjacent to J. C. Nichols Fountain,
at J C Nichols Blvd & Emmanuel Cleaver (46th St)

LWVKC/J/P OFFICERS and BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents:	Donna Hoch	816 322-8071	the hochs@hotmail.com
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Pat Goodwin

Evelyn Maddox

Cheryl Barnes, Communications (off Board)

Dixie Brown and Pauli Kendrick, Membership co-chairs

Peg Prendergast, Special Projects

Caroline Arnold, Nominating Committee Chair

Peg Prendergast and Linda Smith, Newsletter

Sue Scholl, Voter Registration

Charles and Anitra Steele, Candidate and Issue Forums

Pauline Testerman, studies

Carolyn Weeks, Member Development (off Board)

Jane McClain, Women's Equality Week (off Board)