



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

Website: www.lwvkc.org – email. lwvkcjcp@yahoo.com

November/December 2014

PLEASE ATTEND – Upcoming Meetings

Saturday, November 22, 2014

Topic: Democracy in the Balance – Money and Politics

Speaker – Linda Vogel Smith, President, LWVKC/J/C/P

In reviewing progress on issues related to League positions, we see our elected representatives failing to take action on a host of critical issues – climate change, voting rights, gun control, jobs, student debt, public education and investment in the future.

Is there a connection between the enormous amounts of money pouring into elections and the growing polarization of the electorate and the lack of progress on these issues?

PROGRAM BEGINS PROMPTLY AT: 10:00 am

Library at the Community Christian Church **4601 Main** --- South Building

Parking is in the multi-level parking garage to the south of the Church

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HOLIDAY LUNCH

Saturday December 13, 2014 ** 11:00am – 1:00pm

Vivilore – 10815 E. Winner Road, Independence, MO 64052

SPEAKER: Eileen Weir, Mayor of Independence, MO

Presentation: LWVMO Rachael Farr Fitch Award

Your \$20.00 check to "LWVKC/JCP" is your reservation.

Don't wait! Your check must be in

on or before **Saturday, December 6th**

to treasurer: Caroline Arnold, 416 W. 88th St; KC,MO 64114

Please note your lunch selection in memo area of your check:

Quiche or chicken salad

Call Peg Prendergast – 8160213-4687 if you'd like to carpool

President's Message

Linda Smith

League efforts during Oct. and into Nov. were focused largely on the November 4 election.

PRE-ELECTION LWV/KC/J/C/P EDUCATIONAL AND ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

In the run-up to the Nov. election, your League performed admirably in several ways. Our voter registration efforts were robust and included fifteen sites with 135 new voters registered events. This effort was led by Sue Scholl and the team she has assembled. A major issue for all Leagues moving forward is to get out the vote. The percentage of registered voters who actually voted in the November election was, nationally, only 40%."

Education of voters was promoted, in part, through an LWVMO drafted educational document, stating ballot language for the four proposed Missouri Constitution amendments and pros and cons for those ballot issues, which was widely distributed. While we don't have an exact number distributed, it is fair to say that it was in the neighborhood of 1,000 among community leaders and interested voters. These were discussed and distributed at our Nov. 25 regular membership meeting as well as provided to numerous churches and several libraries and made available at other venues, such as the Community Forum against Gun Violence, which was co-sponsored by Grandmothers against Gun Violence and other organizations, including our League.

A separate advocacy document explaining LWVMO opposition to three of the Constitutional Amendment proposals was presented at the LWV/KC membership meeting on October 25. Additionally, at that meeting, the Clay County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Kate Noland presented the case for why voters should approve the proposed constitutional amendment regarding admission of evidence or prior changes in trials and sentencing hearings of individuals charged with sexual abuse of minors. She took time from preparing for such a case to speak to the League.

League officers and board members spoke at several venues including Church Women United in Independence on October 7 and at a League-hosted Table Talk event on October 23.

SCAM EARLY VOTING BALLOT MEASURE DEFEATED

The LWVMO, including LWV/KC/J/C/P, played a major role in the defeat of proposed Missouri Constitutional Amendment No. 6 which purported to establish an early voting system. This was a terribly flawed proposal that would have limited early voting to only six days before an election, to normal business hours only and only at boards of election, and it would have prohibited early voting on Saturday. Worse yet, if passed, it would have effectively blocked future action to achieve a proper early voting system. LWVMO identified Amendment 6 as its priority legislative issue for advocacy during this election. To facilitate action by local League's LWVMO announced the availability of grant money for local Leagues to purchase radio time and newspaper space. Thanks to Cheryl Barnes' efforts, our League will receive \$500 that will pay for some 60 radio messages to educate voters about the flaws of this proposed constitutional amendment. The radio spots, prepared by the St. Louis League, ran on Nov. 3 and 4 on KPRS and KPRT, two local stations which reach, in particular, the African American population in our area. On Nov. 1, Cheryl and I spoke on KKFI's program called "Every Woman." We spoke, in particular, about how the proposal for early voting would be of little, if any, help to women as well as the flaws in the proposed constitutional amendment on teacher evaluation. Delores Furtado, president of the Kansas League of Women Voters, joined us and shared concerns about a Kansas initiative regarding raffles. The Missouri proposals were soundly defeated, Kansans passed the raffle legislation.

FALL CONFERENCE – update

Linda Smith

The LWVMO State Fall meeting was held on November 15 in Sedalia. Linda and Jack Smith and Pauline Testerman represented our League. The Treasurer's report revealed that expenses thus far during 2014 for LWVMO have exceeded income by about \$3,000. The excess of expenditures over income have been associated primarily with the LWVMO-St. Louis League office in St. Louis. No remedies, other than raising money, were proposed. A fun part of the meeting was developing, in small groups, an "Elevator Speech" to "sell" the LWV and its importance in a few words. LWVMO/J/C/P will, at one of our future meetings, do this useful exercise. It was announced that the LWVKC/J/C/P nominee for the League's Rachel Farr Fitch Award, Dr. Bridget McCandless, has been selected as this year's awardee. Dr. McCandless will accept this award personally at our League's holiday luncheon and meeting on December 13. She is being honored for her work in establishing and service in the Share Care Free Clinic of Jackson County. Also, at the LWVMO state meeting, guest speaker, Bob Priddy, who has covered politics in Jefferson City for many years, reflected on the outcome of the November election as well as a forward look at trends and possibilities for the future in Missouri politics. The LWVMO legislation committee outlined its priorities for the coming year. Emphasis will be on expansion of MEDICAID and other health issues (e.g. mental health, and a Missouri drug Registry); education, including tracking action on development of a common core curriculum for Missouri, early childhood education, and student religious liberty (viewed to be an unnecessary bill).

Former LWV Member Honored

Carolyn Weeks

The City of Independence recently honored former Mayor Barbara Potts, the first woman mayor of Independence, by renaming the City Health Department Building the Barbara J. Potts Health Center. She served on the Independence City Council four years and as Mayor eight years. Barbara said, "I'm humbled by it, particularly because this building was Noland School where I attended elementary grades and I lived just 5 blocks away. I'm glad to see these buildings used for community purposes. I'm overwhelmed by this honor."

Mayor Eileen Weir, who introduced Potts, said the idea of honoring Barbara had been on her mind before she took office in April. Weir has admired and respected Barbara's work which initiated and oversaw infrastructure projects that modernized the city and prepared it for future commercial and residential growth. Weir described Barbara's most enduring legacy as her dedication to historic preservation and social concerns, having had a hand in establishing Hope House, the Truman Home Visitors' Center, Bingham-Waggoner Estate, Vaile Mansion, the National Frontier Trails Museum and the Pioneer Women Statue, then served as executive director of the Jackson County Historical Society.

Barbara is a former member of the Independence League of Women Voters.

CHECK IT OUT: we've updated our website – www.lwvkc.org

We'd like to thank Perry Fowler for his work over the years to get us visible before the public with our website development and updates. We recently joined with over 255 Leagues in 39 states in using *league easy web*; to develop our own Web site - using simple forms (ok, it's not that simple, but we are learning more each day). If anyone is interested in learning a new skill and has an interest in taking on this task of updating our website, please email Peg Prendergast at shapeshome@yahoo.com.

Membership Report-Donna Hoch, Dixie Brown & Carolyn Weeks

Thank you to all the LWV members that have sent in their membership renewals. If you have not done this yet, we ask that you do so this month as we want to have all members renewed before the end of the year—preferably before Thanksgiving so we can focus on welcoming new members. The Membership team thanks the following for renewing: Sandra & Curtis Giles, Lysle Weeks, Patricia Keairnes, Maxine Briggs, Janet Archer, June Land, Sherry Templeton, Carol Adams, Pat Kenoyer, Tommye Sexton, Mary Lindsay, Bertie Daw, Donna Ryan, Carol Bachhuber, Nancy Wakefield, Carol Winterowd, Symie and Jay Menitove, Ellie & Richard Dawson and Diane Krizek. We also are excited about adding new members to our ranks. We welcome Jo Agnew Tally, Jan Cohen, Patricia Lanser, Roberta Huke and Beverly Burns. I will be emailing our membership a revised roster with addresses & phone number updates.

We are excited to have 11 new members who have joined our ranks this year. Carolyn Weeks who is our membership development person on the membership team is working to welcome all new members and will be interviewing and introducing them to the membership through short interviews printed in the Voter.

Please continue to invite your friends. Each League member's excitement about what LWV is doing and how they value our efforts is the best advertisement we can have. Remember to ask a friend to check us out. Print off the membership form here in the Voter and give it to someone. Our Mission is to encourage informed and active participation in government, work to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League is filled with amazing women and men who are shaping our future now!

We are shaping the future now--Please continue to be a part of it.

VOTER SERVICES

FORUMS

Charles Steele

On Monday, Oct. 27, a candidate forum for Independence City Council District 4 and Missouri Representative Districts 20 & 29 was held in the Independence City Council chambers. After the pledge of allegiance lead by the Boy Scouts, candidates responded to questions from the audience. The forum was moderated by Independence Examiner's Jeff Fox and staffed by many Independence area Leaguers.

This spring Forum chair Charles Steele is planning multiple forums for Kansas City Mayor and Council seats. In preparation for these, there will be a training session after the first of the year for moderators and other forum 'workers'. If interested in moderating or helping with these forums, please contact Charles Steele at forumslwv@yahoo.com or 816-836-4031.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Sue Scholl

Thanks to all the team members who have helped with the Voter Registration events. Since May 1, 2014 our voter registration team has been to fifteen sites with 135 new voters registered, including change of addresses.

Rachel Farr Fitch Awardee

LWVMO made a decision to award the Rachel Farr Fitch Award for outstanding work in the health field to LWV KC's nominee - Bridget McCandless, M.D. Dr. McCandless was recognized for her outstanding service to the community through her efforts to establish and her service in the *Share Care Free Clinic of Jackson County, MO*. During the years 2001-2013, the Share Care Free Clinic served uninsured low-income adults of Jackson County who have chronic medical conditions. Dr. McCandless fostered physician-patient partnerships to improve the patients' health outcomes. Through her efforts, 80 volunteer health providers were recruited as a multidisciplinary team for the clinic. Dr. McCandless will personally accept the award at the LWV KC/J/C/P Holiday luncheon on December 13. (See separate article on the luncheon).

A Community Forum- "Gun Violence-Finding Common Ground:

Taking Action" was held on October 13. The primary convener was Grandmothers against Gun Violence along with **26 co-sponsors including LWV KC/J/C/P**. Collectively, the co-sponsoring organizations represented over 2,000 individuals in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Over 140 people participated in the Forum. This Forum was held against the background of the ongoing toll taken by guns in our area. Mayor Sly James spoke to the group. The keynote speaker was Representative Stacey Newman of St. Louis, who has been a staunch advocate for effective legislation to curb gun violence. Workshops were held on: Children and Gun Violence; Gun Violence as a public health issue, including the work of "Aim for Peace" in Kansas City; and How to Advocate for Gun Legislation. The forum participants identified "Five Things You Can Do to Stop Gun Violence." The leading actions recommended by participants are: **VOTE, work to elect those who care about gun violence, lobby those who are in office to support sane gun laws, and work to change the culture around guns.**

This forum was an important beginning. The effort will move forward under the umbrella of the newly-founded Heartland Coalition to Against Gun Violence.

In case you did not know, the LWVUS has a position on gun control, which was adopted by the 1990 convention and amended by the 1994 and 1998 conventions. The following is the official summary of the LWVUS public policy decision:

Gun Control: Protect the safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

Additional detail on this policy is found in the document "League of Women Voters of the United States, Impact on Issues, 2012-2014, A Guide to Public Policy Positions."

We would like to hear from you about your views on our directing our League's attention to this serious problem

NOTES FROM THE LWVKC/J/C/P BOARD:

The LWVKC/J/C/P has a member-elected Board that meets monthly. The Board, among other things, reviews and makes decisions on policies and procedures of the organization; provides leadership for the overall direction of our League, within the context of LWVUS and LWVMO policies and procedures; works to engage members in the work of the organization and represents our League both through written word (e.g., official letters to the editor) and at events/meetings in the community. The Board also works to help ensure that our League operates in a non-partisan manner to protect the integrity of the organization.

Two recent discussions that may be of interest to our members are:

- Outside “guests” (people who are not members of the LWV) may make a presentation at regular LWVKC/J/C/P meetings, subject to the approval of the President or Vice President or his/her designee. Presentations by candidates or potential candidates for office are not permitted. The League prefers candidate presentations as candidate forums so the organization can present their positions in a nonpartisan manner reaching and interacting with a broader community audience.
- The LWVKC/J/C/P email lists may be used to transmit information only by officers of the LWVKC/J/C/P. Members who wish to have information transmitted through these email lists should contact either the President or the appropriate Board member with the relevant portfolio (e.g., forums, voter registration, etc) with a request for information transmittal.

Conversation with new member

Carolyn Weeks

A conversation with one of our new members, Jan Cohen, reveals that she is a political activist having worked in recent campaigns. After graduating from Wyandotte High School she completed an undergraduate degree at University of Kansas City (now UMKC) and a MA at University of Illinois majoring in Spanish Language and Literature. Jan and her husband, Ralph, now live in the Red Bridge area. Health and nutrition issues are of special interest to her. For 39 years she has been involved with NeoLife, an international health and fitness company. Her hobby is weaving on a loom using unique materials. For a Thanksgiving holiday she will be traveling to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico to visit her family and daughter, who lives in Chicago. Welcome, Jan!

Where are we "going" with transit? Margie Richcreek-Transit Chair

Support expansion of a public mass transit system and the need for the development of a rapid transit system for the metropolitan Kansas City area. Tri-County ILO study, consensus, and position in 1974

When I read the headline of the KC Star lead editorial on September 24, 2014, "FINALLY, A BOLD PLAN EMERGES TO IMPROVE REGIONAL TRANSIT," (as well as Cindy Frewen Wuellner's Midwest Voices column on August 16, 2014, "CAN-DO SPIRIT STILL NEEDED IN KC") I realized the work of the League and like-minded champions of public action is necessary and on-going.

To write an accurate update on transit issues, I went directly to Karen Clawson, Transportation Planner with Mid America Regional Council (MARC). She has worked with area transit issues since 2006 and is the project manager for KC WORKFORCE CONNEX funded by a very recent \$1.2million grant from the Department of Transportation to MARC. She is also responsible for staffing the Regional Transit Coordinating Council, a joint council of the KCATA and MARC.

Our League's active support for a regional public transit system in Kansas City started in 2002 when our, then, Regional Issues Committee supported and promoted SMART MOVES, a plan for a regional public transit system proposed by MARC. Funding for this system needed enabling legislation for a regional investment fund from both Jefferson City and Topeka, but it didn't happen. Since then, the Smart Moves concept has been kept in mind by transit planners as bus rapid transit (the MAX lines) has been developed, rail commuter lines have been discussed, and a street car line is being built.

In the fall of 2013, MARC's Regional Transit Coordinating Council was established to continue work being done through the years to promote a more unified system of transit service throughout our two-state seven-county region. As recently as September, 2014, the ideas of this council are coming to fruition as the KC Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) Board of Directors moves toward taking their legislated authority to administer the four transit systems in our region - The Metro, The JO, Unified Government Transit, and Independence Transit. It's a vision in progress, but we're closer than we have been in years.

Coinciding with this development at KCATA, is the \$1.2million grant mentioned above. The money will be used to fund KC Workforce Connex, focusing on using public transit to improve the connection between jobs and housing, and to involve the community in the overall effort. This initiative will be led by MARC's Regional Transit Coordinating Council. And the Smart Moves regional transit vision will be updated starting in January, 2015.

It seems that things are turning a corner and heading toward some significant changes. Therefore, I will represent our League at the KCATA Board of Directors meeting on October 22 and MARC's Regional Transit Coordinating Council on November 4th and let them know of our support for their recent actions toward a more unified regional public transit system. I'll keep you all posted on the progress being made. In the meantime, I encourage you to choose a destination and use public transit sometime soon. Plan to participate as we resume action on this long held League position on a regional public transit system for Kansas City.

UPCOMING EVENTS

1st Mon	Monthly	LWV KC Board Meeting	KC North Library
Saturday	Nov. 22	Democracy in the Balance – Money and Politics	Library – Community Christian Church
Saturday	Dec. 13	Holiday Lunch Independence, MO Mayor Eileen Weir	Vivilore 10815 E Winner Rd Independence, MO
Saturday	Jan. 17	LWV Program Planning Meeting	Library – Community Christian Church
Saturday	Feb. 21	Kansas City Budget Tentative: Troy Schulte	Library – Community Christian Church
Saturday	Mar. 21	National Commission on Voting Rights	Library – Community Christian Church
Saturday	Apr. 18	Program Focus – Living Wage	Library – Community Christian Church
Saturday	May 16	Annual Meeting	TBD
		LWV MO – State Convention	

2014-2015 CALENDAR

LWV KC OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:	Linda Vogel Smith	816-741-6110	lindaavogel@me.com
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Cheryl Barnes	Dixie Brown
Donna Hoch	Pauli Kendrick
Peg Prendergast	Sue Scholl
Pauline Testerman	Carolyn Weeks