

March 2017



THE VOTER

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

www.lwvkc.org – email. [lwvkjcp@gmail](mailto:lwvkjcp@gmail.com) 816-464-1800

MONTHLY MEETING – MARCH 18 (Saturday)

BALLOT ISSUES – APRIL 4 ELECTION

REPORTS ON FORUMS, FORTHCOMING

EVENTS AND MORE

Social time – 9:30 – 10:00

Meeting Begins 10:00

**Venue: Community Christian Church, Centennial Hall on
south side of building, 4700 Main Street, KCMO**

Co-President's message (Linda Smith and Donna Hoch)

Reflections on Building Relationships and Bridges

About three years ago, we made an intentional decision to work on building relationships, including partnerships, with other groups and on building bridges

with other women, particularly with women of color. That is not to say that we have had no women of color in our League. We have, but the numbers of been small and, frankly, we were not a very diverse group. Moreover, we were conscious that we were largely a group of older women and had, perhaps, become type-cast.

We had linked with other groups, such as the AAUW and the Johnson County League for selected event, but we had been limited in the scope of what we did and there was limited continuity from event to event.

A turning point for us was Women's Equality Week (WEW) in August 2016 when we joined together with leadership from LWV members, Jane McClain, Sandra Fowler Jiles and others, to plan a program on the theme "Women's Equality and Race - Bridging the Gap to Sisterhood." It was held on August 22, 2016, at the Bruce Watkins Center. Our partners in planning and making the even were the Alpha Kappa Alpha Mu Omega Chapter, the Women of the NAACP Kansas City, and El Centro. The amazing Barbara Anne Washington, Esq., of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Anita Russell of the NAACP, and Pat Jones were great partners in this effort. We couldn't stop talking about how good we felt about this event, the "sisterhood" we felt and how we hoped we could continue to work with these wonderful women.

Moving on into September and October 2016 we worked together, often side-by-side, at phone banks in the effort to defeat Constitutional Amendment 6 to the Missouri Constitution. We found this solidarity good for the effort and good for our souls. It reinforced our sense of sisterhood that we had felt in August. Even though we were discouraged by the outcome of the election, we gained from this experience.

We were determined not to let these relationships dwindle. This resulted in the joint planning of the February 23, 2017, event – "Bridging the Gap - Celebrating sisterhood." This time our partnership was broader including the KCMO Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Nationally, the LWVUS, Women in the NAACP, Kappa Alpha Theta and Delta Sigma Theta represent approximately 400,000 women. That is power!

On February 23, one hundred seven diverse women gathered at Community Christian Church where we were led by Barbara Ann Washington, Esq. This event also celebrated the 108th anniversary of the NAACP and the 97th anniversary of the LWV. Breakout groups focused on identifying issues that bring us together and what the obstacles are to coming together. Many thoughts emerged from those discussions. As Barbara Anne said “we have work to do!” We hope to plan more cooperative events in the future. Discussions are already taking place about a Women’s Equality Week program in August 2017.

ERA RISING?

We have watched, with disappointed hearts, the struggle over the past 32 years to get the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ratified. With only three more states needed, it still has not happened.

Recently, the national ERA Coalition reported that the show of solidarity and strength demonstrated by women across the country (e.g. the January 22 Women’s March in Washington, D.C. and other cities) has inspired new action to move the ratification process forward.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Democrat NY (HJ Res 33) and Senator Jose Mendez, Democrat Texas (SJ Res 6) have introduced legislation. Senator Ben Cardin, Democrat Maryland, has introduced a three-State Strategy legislation (SF Res 5) and Congresswoman Jackie Speier, Democrat California, has introduced a companion bill.

In a March 3 column in the *Kansas City Star*, Mary Sanchez quoted deceased Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia who said: “The Constitution does not protect women from sexual discrimination. No one ever thought that’s what it meant. No one ever voted for that.”

The following is the text of H.J. Res.33:

“Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States:

Article ---

“Section 1. Women shall have equal rights in the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

“Section 2. Congress and the several States shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

“Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.”

Supporters of the proposed legislation are encouraging women and men to take action across the country. One suggestion is hosting house parties to screen the documentary “Equal Means Equal.”



**CHANGES IN OUR TAX STATUS
NOW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR LEAGUE
ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

We have received notice from the IRS that they have determined that we qualify for exemptions from Federal income tax under the internal revenue Code Section 501(C)(3). This means that members can deduct contributions including dues from their taxes if they itemize their deductions on their tax returns. The effective date is June 3, 2016, the date we filed for the 501(C)(3) designation.

What you can deduct:

1. Your dues, money given to help publish the Voters Guide, money given in memory of another Leaguer, and money donated.
2. Volunteers can take a mileage deduction at the rate of 14 cents per mile or keep track of annual expenses. Examples: when you do voter registration, phone banking, give talks for the League, attend meetings for the League – write down your mileage.
3. Volunteers can deduct travel expenses such as airfare and other transportation expenses, accommodations and meals when performing services for the League away from home like going to State or National Convention. You must be really working and attending meetings.
4. Out-of-pocket expenses can also be deducted. Board members and committee members might deduct unreimbursed phone, postage and copying charges associated with preparing for meetings.
5. Volunteers must keep reliable written records of expenses. If you submit your receipts to our treasurer, Caroline Arnold, she will keep track of them and send a written record of your donation of non-reimbursed expenses and financial giving in January.

You may wish to talk to a tax professional for clarification of IRS rules for volunteers.

We have also submitted form 5768 which allows us to elect to have the provisions of section 501(h) of the Code relating to expenditures to influence legislation. We cannot spend more than 20% of our budget on lobbying efforts.

Anitra Steele and Donna Hoch are still working to be sure that we have completed all the requirements. They also are trying to see whether we are eligible for sales tax exemption.

Donna and Anitra started work on researching the idea of becoming a 501(C)(3) in July 2015. With the help of retired accountant, Tom Carson, in California and Kathleen Farrell (St. Louis League) and others in the St. Louis Metro League, who had completed the change to a 501(C)(3), our League was able to amend its By-Laws and correct our Articles of Incorporation so that we could qualify. The wait for the decision is over. We are happy that we can tell you that we have Public Charity Status and that this will make it easier for us to function. It will be easier for us to qualify for grants, obtain use of meeting places such as the Kauffman Foundation, and to do fundraising. It means we do not have to send donations to

the Education Fund at the State level. We can receive those donations locally and administer those funds locally and the donors will receive notice from us that these donations are tax deductible for those who itemize deductions.

Anitra and Donna have expressed thanks to the membership for supporting these successful efforts.

NEW PROPOSED LEGISLATION PUTS MISSOURI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS AT RISK

It should not have come as a surprise that Missouri's General Assembly would attack the public school system, under the guise of making education better, because they said that is what they were going to do. What came as a surprise is that it happened so early in this legislature's session.

Senator Ed Emery has sponsored and submitted, SB 32, the Missouri Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Program which would allow a taxpayer to make contributions to "educational Assistance organizations," 501(C)(3) organizations, to provide scholarships for K-12 students to use to attend private schools. In turn, the tax payer would get a full tax credit; i.e., a credit equal to 100% of the contribution (but not for their own dependent).

SB 32 also allows Missourians to create education savings accounts with education assistance organizations for k-12 tuition for private schools or for the cost of homeschooling their own children. Contributors to individual education savings accounts would also get full tax credits, except for their own dependents. The annual cumulative amount of tax credits would be limited to \$25 million.

The following is the position taken by the League of Women Voters of Metro St. Louis. We fully concur with this position:

"The League of Women Voters of Metro St. Louis opposes this bill because, if enacted, it would drain tax dollars away from public schools to private schools via the 100% tax credit provision. Missouri public schools are already operating under significant duress due, in large part, to chronic reductions in state funds to local school districts. It is

estimated that the Foundation Formula is underfunded by at least \$400 million. This measure would further reduce tax dollars available to support public schools while at the same time, bolstering private schools. Article IX, Section 1(a) of the Missouri Constitution makes it clear that the General Assembly's first obligation is to establish and **maintain** public schools, not private schools.”

We encourage our League members and others to write to their legislators to oppose SB 32.

Background and HB 634 Fiscal Analysis for Charter School Expansion

3/3/2017

The fiscal analysis prepared as part of the legislative process presents a misleading picture of the possible impact on public school systems. The following information is intended to explain that hazard.

FISCAL ANALYSIS ASSUMPTION Officials at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) assume the number of potential new charter Local Education Authorities (LEAs) that may open is unknown; therefore, the cost is unknown.

Based on current staffing levels, for every seven new charter LEAs, one FTE at the Supervisor or equivalent level would be required to maintain the current level of support, including processing new applications and renewals, reviewing applications for new sponsor authorizers, completing sponsor evaluations, and providing support and assistance to sponsors and LEAs.

Current statutes restrict where charter schools can operate. Those areas include the St. Louis City School District, Kansas City Public School District, and areas with unaccredited school districts. This proposal would expand the areas that charter schools could operate in to charter counties (Jackson, Jefferson, St. Charles and St. Louis counties) and counties of the first classification (Buchanan, Platte, Clay, Cass, Jasper, Greene, Christian, Taney, Camden, Cole, Boone, Callaway, Franklin and Cape Girardeau counties).

The previous version of this proposal required the charter school to be sponsored by the school district in which they chose to locate. This new version of the proposal removes that requirement but requires that a charter school ask for the school district's sponsorship first. This proposal requires the local school district be given 45 days to accept or reject sponsorship of the charter school. There is an assumption that this process, by which a school district is allowed 45 days to consider sponsorship, would not have a fiscal impact. Should a student choose to attend a charter school, the state payment for those students (\$6,241) would transfer from the public school to the charter schools.

Our thanks to Delores Blaser for staying on top of these school issues.

LWV VOLUNTEER VOTER REGISTRARS NEEDED
For Kansas City Election Board Area

Registrar Orientation will be held on Thursday, April 20, at 6:00 p.m. at the KC Library Waldo Branch, 201 East 75th Street, Room A

To be a registrar in KCMO, a person must reside within the boundaries of the Kansas City limits in Jackson County and be an LWV member.

Individuals wishing to be a volunteer voter registrar must attend a 45 minute KC election Board orientation.

Former and current registrars need to be recertified annually. Training for that purpose is also on April 20 at 6:00 p.m.

Voter registration cards can be distributed by those not meeting the KCEB residency requirement for being registrars. Orientation also April 20 at 6:00 p.m.

RSVP: Sue Scholl, 816 444-2623, USAFscholl@aol.com or Delores Blaser, 816 942-6040, dblaser12345@gmail.com

MEMBERSHIP

We are pleased to welcome 18 new members to our League this makes a total of 109 active members.

The following introduces new member Paula Zaiss:

Paula was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She is a first generation American; something that fills her with great pride. Upon graduation from high school, she attended Brooklyn College and Fairleigh Dickinson University. Marketing was her major interest.

She married an Army Officer in 1968. With their two children they lived in Georgia, California, Germany and Central America. During an extended period of residency in Georgia, she joined an upscale retail business where she became the Merchandise Mgr/Fashion Director until 1983. The family moved to Kansas City in 1990 where she was employed as General Merchandise Mgr/Senior Buyer for Finley Fine Jewelry located in eight Jones Stores. She left that position in 1996. In a time of deep soul searching she joined a Catholic Missionary non-profit with missions in 25 countries as a liaison between sponsors and children/elderly in Africa, India, Philippines and Haiti. To date, she considers the work with the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging the most important work she has done and her most life altering experience. Paula left the Foundation in 2003 when diagnosed with cancer. The subsequent treatment required almost three years of down time.

While serving as volunteer Outreach Coordination for the Hilary Clinton campaign she became friends with LWV member Evelyn Maddox. Evelyn's commitment to voter protection inspired Paula to join the League to learn more about the legislative process on local and state levels. Paula holds voting rights for every single citizen in the country to be an absolute priority. She is currently working our League's membership committee.

Paula is a voracious reader of non-fiction, particularly historical and biographical and she still has a keen interest in fashion. She volunteers on the production side of a local theatre company. For relaxation, she creates jewelry from semi-precious stones and pearls. Her very favorite pastime...being with her last little munchkin, Aiden, a funny eight-year old with infectious joy and happiness.

EQUITY ACTION DAY IN JEFFERSON CITY – APRIL 4

Hundreds of women are planning to converge in Jefferson City on April 4 for "Equity Day." This includes, but is not limited to women of the AAUW and several LWVs.

The Plan is:

- **Upon arrival at the Capitol, participants will meet in a reserved hearing room for briefing and assignments to legislators. The day will include two briefings, two (or more) legislative visits and lunch. Materials and training will be provided.**

- **Departure from the Capitol will be at about 2:30 p.m.**

The KC AAUW is planning to charter a bus on which League members may have a seat at a cost of \$28.20. If you want to reserve a place on the bus, send your check made out to AAUW-KC to:

**Dr. Carol Cowles
6724 Locust Street
Kansas City, MO 64131**

Phone: 847 846-3450

The deadline for reserving your place is March 21.

UPCOMING EVENTS and FORUMS

Where our League is a sponsor or significant participant

March 9 – Informational Forum in the KCMO Northland on the proposed \$800 million bond issue for infrastructure improvements in KCMO over a 20 year period, which will be on the April 4 ballot. Mayor Sly James and City Manager Troy Schulte will be present. The venue is the conference room at Northland Neighborhoods Inc. (NNI). Our League is co-sponsoring the event with the NNI which is located at 4420 NE Choteau Traffic way, KCMO. The event will be from 6:30 p.m. – 8:00. A separate forum on the other ballot issues will be held on March 30 at the same site.

Co-sponsored with Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. (Deb Hermann, Executive Director).

Venue: NNI offices at 4420 NE Choteau Traffic way, KCMO

March 15 - Ballot issues forum in cooperation with the NAACP. This will cover all five ballot issues.

Venue: Bruce Watkins Culture Center on Blue Parkway.

6:30 p.m. – 8:30

March 28 (Tuesday). Our League and the Raytown Area Chamber of Commerce will sponsor a Raytown Alderman Candidate Forum. We have partnered with the Raytown Area Chamber of Commerce a number of times and the forums are always interesting

Time: 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Venue: Raytown City Hall 10000 E. 59th Street in the Council Chambers

March 30 - Northland forum (6:30 pm to 8:00 pm) on the KCMO Ballot Issues not covered at the March 9 informational forum. This includes the proposed measure to reduce legal penalties and prosecutions for possessing small amounts of marijuana and a proposed tax specifically for improvements on the east side of KCMO. Also on the ballot, is a proposed tax specifically for improvements on the east side of KCMO.

Venue: NNI offices at 4420 NE Choteau Trafficway, KCMO

Co-sponsors: Our League and the NNI.

These forums are an important way for you to participate, either by being present and asking questions or helping to make them happen. If you wish to volunteer to help (e.g. question gatherer and sorter, personing the League table to answer questions about the League, greeting people) please call Anitra Steele at 816 836-4031.

VOTE411.ORG WILL GO LIVE MARCH 15!

Our League has joined VOTE411.org. The VOTE411.org website, which is sponsored by the League of Women Voters Education Fund, provides comprehensive voting and election information such as polling locations, voter registration requirements, important dates, identification requirements and more. Although voters in the greater Kansas City area have had access to VOTE411.org for national and statewide races, they will now be able to access information for local races such as county, municipal, and school district elections.

What is vote411.org?

VOTE411.org is more than just a sample ballot. Voters can use it to find information specific to their voting jurisdiction. Upon entering their address, voters will have access to information about the races and ballot issues specific to where they live. Voters will be able to use VOTE411.org's interactive tool to compare candidates and ballot issues, make choices, and print a ballot to take to the polls.

March 15 is the scheduled date that VOTE411.org will go live in the four-county Kansas City area. On that date, voters in Jackson, Cass, Clay and Platte counties will be able to log onto the website, enter their address and view the actual ballot they will see on April 4.

Candidates and ballot issues for 255 municipal, school board and special district races have been entered (all by LWVKC volunteers) into the website. Candidates for whom an email address has been identified have been contacted to provide biographical information and responses to the following questions:

- What are your top three priorities?
- Why are you qualified to serve in this office?

Although the League is not printing a voters' guide for this April 4 election, our League's Voters Guide committee (headed by Pat Goodwin) is distributing information on using this valuable on-line tool to libraries, community centers, businesses, and other high traffic areas. Also, League members have been asked to share this information with the churches, social groups, neighbors, and others. The committee appreciates everyone's effort to show our community how easy it is to become an informed voter.

TRY IT YOURSELF AND LET PAT KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF THIS TOOL! AND, PLEASE HELP PROMOTE VOTE411. SHARE WITH YOUR BRIDGE CLUB, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR CHURCH CIRCLE, EXERCISE CLASS, FAVORITE LIBRARIES AND YOUR BEAUTY SHOP.

Contact Pat Goodwin at 816-799-5555 or email her at patgoodwin6@gmail.com for more information and to give her and her team well-deserved kudos.

STATE CONVENTION: The State Convention will be held September 28-29 in Springfield. Any member of League can go. More information will follow in a separate message.

OFFICERS and BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents: Donna Hoch	816 322-8071	the hochs@hotmail.com
Linda Vogel Smith	816-741-6110	lindaavogel@me.com
Vice President: Charles Steele	816 836-4031	anitrasteel@yahoo.com
Secretary: Anitra Steele	816-836-4031	anitrasteel@yahoo.com
Treasurer: Caroline Arnold	816 333-6059	cmarnold@att.net

Pat Goodwin
Evelyn Maddox
Cheryl Barnes, Communications (off Board)
Paula Zaiss and Dixie Brown, Membership
Peg Prendergast, Special Projects
Caroline Arnold, Treasurer
Pauli Kendrick, Liaison to Northland Organizations
Linda Smith, Newsletter, speakers
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)

You will be pleased to notice our website continues to be updated.

Check it out at: <http://www.lwvkc.org>