



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TOPEKA/SHAWNEE COUNTY

VOTER

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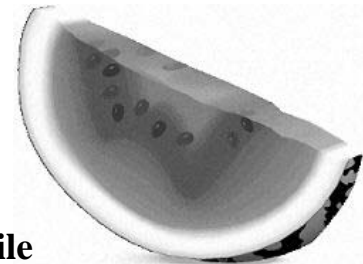
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July 2004

6

Tuesday Topics - Lunch 11:30 am

Speakers: **Harry Allen** and **Denis Shumate**,
“An Up Close and Personal View of the Juvenile
Justice System” *Our meal is quiche, tossed salad, rolls, cookie, water and tea.*



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LWVT/SC Board Meeting - Members welcome

5:30 pm, Fritz Co Grille, 1717 SW Wanamaker Rd.

August 2004

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Tuesday Topics - Lunch 11:30 am

Speaker: **Randy Speaker**, Topeka Housing Authority, “**Finding Affordable Housing in Topeka**” *Our meal is chicken salad croissant, pasta salad, carrot cake, water and tea.*

10

LWVT/SC Board Meeting - Members welcome

5:30 pm, location to be announced

(VOTER information is due for Sept. VOTER. Send materials to **Carol Yoho:cyoho@cox.net**)

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Membership Recruitment Party

6:00 pm, at the home of Patty Pressman — see details, p. 3



—There will be no VOICE meetings July or August—

**July & Aug.
Tuesday
Topics**

July & August Tuesday Topics will be held in room **JCM 101B**, across from the Millennium Cafe at the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library. Meals are available to the first twenty-five arriving, @ \$8.25/ea.
If you need a ride to any League event, contact Betsy Rohleder.



PreZ SeZ...

July/August 2004:

Summer brings a bit of downtime for most League activities.

Committees/study groups continue their work while gearing up for VOICE meetings starting again in the Fall. Membership committee is planning the annual event for August—a great event for prospective members and also a great way to get re-acquainted with existing members in a less formal, more social setting. Please put **August 17** on your calendars now and plan to attend with a friend or new member prospect.

Tuesday Topics continues to draw more and more members and guests due to the quality and timeliness of the topics and speakers! For those League members outside of Topeka/Shawnee County or who are not members of our local who are reading our Voter...please feel free to attend Tuesday Topics (the first Tuesday of every month). We know, in Topeka, that we have some great resources. We'd love to have you as a guest at any of our Tuesday Topics.

Do you or someone you know, want to receive an Advance Voting Ballot? Now is the time to call the Election Commissioner to request it for the August 3rd election.

There will be a very important issue on the August ballot—the rescinding of the quarter cent sales tax and the approval of a half cent sales tax that will be used by both the county and the city for infrastructure—major highway and bridge work that must be done by both county and city. It will continue the funding for economic development and job creation. It is a twelve year sales tax proposal. This is an important issue for all of Shawnee Countians, but for those in the City it is particularly important because more of the city's capital improvement program dollars will be able to be utilized for city projects other than these major street and bridge

improvements. The current ¼ cent sales tax generated \$5 million per year. The Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce reports that 2131 jobs have been retained from 2002-present, 1271 NEW jobs have been created in the same period of time, 30% of the sales tax revenue now is being paid by guests and visitors to our community, and new investment in the community totaled 236 million dollars during the same period of time!

I have an apology to put forth to all new members...we have been remiss in issuing a formal welcome to each of you as you have joined our local League. We hope you will soon, if not already, be involved in committee or study work that interests you. In no particular order, the new members since March of 2003 include Cora Spencer, Paul Kindling, Gloria Phenix, Nancy Garfield, Teresa Stambaugh, Tom Leuche, Dean McCulley, Dona Peterson, Nancy and Bob Whiffen, Anita Epps, Evelyn Ediger, Sarah Mays, Phyllis Jelly, Elizabeth Post, Carol Ballentine, Margaret Ahrens, and Glen Montgomery. If you have any questions about other activities in the League or opportunities to put your expertise and interest to work, call Patty Pressman or Betsy Rohleder.

The recent Form of Government meetings at Washburn had great representation by League members...and, wonderful photos and comments in the papers! Thanks to each of you who were able to attend and contribute to the forums. If you have notes or thoughts that you want the Board to consider, please forward them to Betsy Rohleder, President or Nancy Kindling, Action Chair.

Vote pins are selling well. Money raised is to be used for some of the extra Voter Service activities that occur in an Election Year. Have you any more ideas or prospects for the pins? Call Betsy if you wish to take some to a meeting or event that you attend. Wouldn't it be fun to see these pins on all of the lapels of our members AND friends for the remainder of the year?

— *Betsy Rohleder*

Tuesday Topics Report: May 2004

report and photo by Carol Yoho

Dick Barta, Shawnee County Sheriff, *Tuesday Topics, May 4, 2004*

Sheriff Barta came to the sheriff's office after retiring as a Major in the Kansas Highway Patrol, where he served for 29 years. The sheriff's department works closely with the National Guard, Emergency Services, the city's Police Department and the KBI. They share office space and training facilities with Topeka's police, but have separate vehicle storage and properties rooms.

The Sheriff's Department works closely with Topeka Police Department in planning and acquiring law enforcement technology. In-car computers, video cameras and computer technologies are compatible between sheriff's officers and police staff.

Concerning city-county consolidation, Barta feels that he was elected to be an administrator, and that such decisions would be better made by policy-making elected officials.

Sheriff Barta mentioned that the Topeka Citizens Academy recently graduated a class of 60. He feels that the Academy builds bonds of trust between citizens of Topeka and their law enforcement officials.

Most of the Sheriff's thirty reserve officers are college graduates and are of high caliber. Usually eight to twelve officers work a single shift. It is their responsibility to patrol the entire county. This means there are fewer officers to patrol a larger area than the city's Police Department is asked to serve. Barta understands why Shawnee County residents worry they may lose coverage should the Sheriff's Department consolidate with city police.

Concerning whether city police officers or sheriff's officers respond to calls within the city, Barta said his officers respond to any call they receive.

Currently the city's police are nationally accredited. The sheriff's department is working toward accreditation and hope to achieve it by fall 2005.

In the question-and-answer period, Barta reported that meth lab raids have diminished in recent years.



Last year there were eight raids, down from nearly seventy raids several years previously. Fewer labs are being set up in residential areas. Now officers must search for labs in pastures, along creek banks, in isolated/abandoned farm buildings, and inside vehicles suspected as "rolling" lab sites. Finding and charging meth producers is more challenging than it once was.

When asked about his greatest challenge as Shawnee County Sheriff, Barta stated that his concern is not budget and not crime rate, but rather acquiring and keeping top-notch personnel as sheriff's officers.



Membership Recruitment Party!

Bring potential members

6 PM, Tuesday, August 17
at the home of Patty Pressman
4115 SW Eagle Point Rd.

(Eagle Point Rd. is south of 41st & Urish Rd.)

Come for a light supper and a chance for others to find out more about the League.

Reservation deadline is Aug. 14
NO COST, but we need to know how many
Call Patty Pressman, 478-6836

Tuesday Topics Report: June 2004

report and photo by Carol Yoho

Legislative Wrap-up 2004 *Tuesday Topics, June 1 2004*

Don and Judy Moler

Don Moler is Executive Director of the Kansas League of Municipalities.

Judy Moler, in addition to her duties as LWV board member, works with the Kansas Association of Counties, serving as Legislative Services Director and General Council. As a team, the Molers discussed the 2004 Legislative session at our June 1, 2004, Tuesday Topics meeting:

ANNEXATION: A measure giving property owners the power to refuse annexation passed both Houses. Governor Sebelius vetoed the legislation.

CONSOLIDATION: Went nowhere.

COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT: Both Cloud and Lincoln counties would eliminate their sheriffs by eliminating the office of sheriff by this legislation. The legality of such actions by counties was condoned in legislation passed by both houses.

Governor Sebelius vetoed the measure. Discussion of this issue is likely to resurface next session.

FUTURE FUNDING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: City sales taxes are maxed out and cities need a broader palette of taxing options. Cities would like the option of passing income taxes, earnings taxes (a tax to keep a portion of the salaries of commuting workers), and fuel taxes. These are traditionally taxing options limited to state level use. No specific legislation was passed this session, but the topic is likely to be re-visited next session.

TAXING WIRELESS COMMUNICATION: This legislation, supported by Judy and the KAC, was voted into law. Starting in July, a 50¢ wireless bill surcharge will provide funding to support statewide use of location-sensing technology when wireless phones are used by anyone calling for emergency help.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM: Legislation passed which allows elected officials more flexibil-



ity in using campaign donations. A politician could use "campaign war chest funds" in support of running for a different office than the one currently held. Governor Sebelius

vetoed this legislation. Next session legislators are likely to try to override the governor's veto or to pass a reworded version of this legislation.

SURPLUS PUBLIC PROPERTY: Legislation passed allowing counties to get rid of surplus property.

CONCEALED CARRY: Kansas is one of only six states that do not allow citizens to carry concealed weapons. The Kansas League of Municipalities is in favor of allowing for local control of this issue. Legislation allowing for concealed carry of weapons passed the legislature, but was vetoed by Governor Sebelius.

EXPANDED SOLID WASTE FEES: This legislation passed, allowing funds to be used to recycle solid wastes.

EMINENT DOMAIN: Legislation nearly passed allowing city governments to condemn property for use not only for public works but also for economic development (like property acquired from a Topeka landowner, previously unwilling to sell land needed for the Target Distribution Center here). This is a local control issue and it will be studied in the interim leading to the next legislative session.

PREDICTIONS FOR 2005 SESSION:

- Hot topic issues like school finance, gay marriage, and concealed carry are likely to be readdressed.
- The Senate is likely to change radically. The death of Stan Clark of Oakley and the decision of at least eight other senators not to run for re-election will effect the composition of the Senate. The current Republican majority is nearly evenly split within their own party between ultra-conservatives and others. Members are frozen in inaction for fear of alienating their own faction. The legislature is frac-

- tured and will be more fractured next session.
- The state does not have enough money to do what they need to do. Creative financing of state and local governments must be addressed.
- The idea of school district consolidation across county lines may be explored next session. The necessity of this action, especially in western counties, is becoming an economic pressure. There is no political will to address the problem.
- It is unlikely that the Kansas Supreme Court will uphold Judge Bullock's judgement concerning school finance in total. However, sections of his ruling are likely to be supported by the court. Legislators will probably reexamine school-funding formulas and, possibly, find the need to increase funding for education.
- Wind farming is a big county question. Judy supports local control of the issue. However, only half of Kansas's counties have planning commissions - so those counties are at a disadvantage in discussing controls. Legislatures are expecting a favorable opinion from the National Supreme Court on this issue.



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Observer Report, City Council June 4, 2004, by Audrey Frentzel

An Ordinance, introduced by Mayor James McClinton, related to Housing and Neighborhood Development, repealing certain sections that would change the city's method of investing public money in Topeka.

This pertains to neighborhoods that have problems with blight, crime streets and revitalization. The measure would shift the city's focus to revitalizing entire neighborhoods rather than investing smaller amounts of money on scattered projects that has been a city policy in the past. The ordinance was proposed in March by Mayor McClinton who said it would change the way Topeka spends \$2 million each year in federal, state and city money to help neighborhoods. The plan would change the committee that advises Randy Speaker, director of city housing and neighborhood develop-

ment department. That group, named the Community Development Advisory Council, is allowed 45 members.

The proposed ordinance would allow a 21 Member Citizen Advisory Council. Three members would be appointed by the mayor and one would be elected by each of the city's neighborhood improvement associations.

Councilwoman, Lover Chanler proposed the ordinance be deferred until June 8 meeting. She initially understood the ordinance would be voted on June 8, and was concerned that some residents had been told the council wouldn't act upon the ordinance until then.

More than 70 people attended this meeting. Many of them left as soon as the council deferred the ordinance on a 5-4 vote.

Mark Your Calendar:
 Tuesday, August 17, 6 pm
Membership Recruitment Party!

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

July/August 2004
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VOTER
 OF TOPEKA/SHAWNEE COUNTY
 THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS



Please contact Nancy Kindling at 273-8578 or e-mail nmkindling@aol.com if you are interested in helping to follow actions by groups on the change in city government or attend some of the meetings. Nancy will be glad to contact you if you are interested.

We still have VOTE pins for sale and you can get them by calling Betsy. We have raised a considerable amount of money from their sale. We hope all members will still be able to sell or buy those pins remaining.



WHY BUY? To support your local League, to give as gifts, to wear yourself, to resell to others and to support getting out the vote.

WHO BUYS? Family, friends, government workers, candidates, elected officials, and many others.

YES!

I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League of Women Voters. I enclose:

\$48 for 1-year Individual Membership \$72 for a 1-year Household Membership

\$85 for a 1-year Sustaining Membership Please send more information.

I am unable to join the League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$_____.

Name _____

Please send to:

Address _____

Vivian McCulley

City, State, Zip _____

5000 NW 52nd Street

Phone (hm) _____ (wk) _____

785-246-0546

E-Mail (for Action Alerts) _____

TOPEKA KS 66618

Make checks payable to League of Women Voters of Topeka-Shawnee County