



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TOPEKA/SHAWNEE COUNTY

VOTER

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March 2004

2 **Tuesday Topics - Lunch 11:30 am**
Speaker: **Sarah Mays**, Officer, Shawnee County Court Services
Juvenile Justice, an Advocate's View

8 **VOTER materials due - due early for Annual Meeting**
Please e-mail or mail to Carol Yoho as soon as you can! E-mail: cyoho@cox.net
ALSO: all annual reports due to Betsy Rohleder. E-mail: brohleder@cjnetworks.com

9 **LWVT/SC Board Meeting - Members welcome**
5:30 pm, Top of the Tower, Bank of America Tower. Stay and eat after, if you'd like.

11 **State Day at the Capitol-** for information contact Lisa at the state office, 234-5152. Register by Friday, March 5.

16/18 **VOICE Meetings** - Tuesday, Mar. 16, 12 noon, at Kindling's home and Mar. 18, 5:30 pm, McFarland's. Subject is Juvenile Justice and Corrections.

April 2004

3 **Annual Meeting - 9:30 am, Olivia Davis, Lenexa, speaker**

6 **Tuesday Topics - 11:30 am, Mayor James McClinton, speaker**



March
Tuesday
Topics

February Tuesday Topics will be **Mar. 2** in room **JCM 101B**, across from the Millennium Cafe at the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library. To the first 25 arriving, the menu will be Meatloaf Sandwich, chips, sheet cake, and iced tea or water. Please check whether LWV meals have been covered before going through the cafe line for a box or tray. **Cost of lunch is \$8.25.**

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of public issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



PreZ SeZ...

March 2004:

How many of you from Topeka remember the great column

in the paper called the "Uppity Woman"? **Lloyd Olivia Davis, aka The Uppity Woman, will be our annual meeting speaker on April 3 at the Library.** Please mark your calendars now to attend.

I have been so blessed this year with a great group of Board members. I want you to know that the jobs on the Board are never hard ones when there are enough people to take them! We have doubled up some this year and some Board members are shuffling roles for next year. Carol Yoho has agreed to do the Voter for the next 2 years - a big thanks to her, and to our retiring Grace Wilson (who promises to be active in other ways in the League!). Mary Ann Bradford has been my "behind the scenes" help all year and I send her kudos! Please thank HER if you think things have been going relatively well and on time! And, two more great example of leaders training leaders both Mary Ann Bradford and Vivian McCulley have agreed to train new Board members who can take on their roles in upcoming years. If you are interested in a future leadership role in this League, NOW is the time to let us know we have lots of experience and expertise on our Board. The reality? We just have a great number of talented folks in this League!

Last, but not least **VOTE! Pins for sale.**

As you may already know, your Board authorized a mini fundraiser for this year. At the time this is being written, we have sold nearly 100 pins! And, we hadn't even told you about it yet! We have a number of goals:

- infuse the Treasury so that we can continue to not raise dues and still get our studies and action events done,
- raise awareness of what we stand for in the League, and

- encourage our community members to not only register to vote, but to become informed voters at the polls.

Please help us! Call and buy YOUR pin to wear (only \$10). It's easy this is an election year! Then sell as many as you wish to others that will wear them proudly this election year. I will buy you a "free" pin for every 10 that you sell before April 3rd!

Betsy Rohleder

Mark Your Calendar :

Annual Meeting

Saturday, Apr. 3, 2004, 9:30 AM

Sheffel Room, TSCPL

Guest Speaker: **Olivia Davis**, Uppity Woman columnist. *A continental breakfast will be served.*



League of Women Voters T-SC

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Nominating Committee
Georgia Sandlin, Chair
gsandlin@cox.net
272-6076
Sue Gaither, Dottie Harder,
Nancy Sargent and Jan Waide

Observer Reports

City Council - Feb. 3, 2004

by Audrey Frentzel, Observer

This was a short meeting. Love Chanler was sworn in as the District 3 council member at the start of the meeting. She was selected at the meeting last week to fill the seat vacated by Harold Lane, who resigned to fill the state's 58th District Representative seat. Council Jeff Preisner was absent.

A communication requesting approval of the real estate reports and method of disposal of City of Topeka surplus property at 306 SE 17th Street was introduced. All City departments had indicated they have no need for the property. The Council voted the property be used for the Historical Monroe School and for the walking trail. The property will be utilized for Visitor Parking at the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site.

Councilman Bill Haynes introduced a proposal to change when and how the council meets. It was defeated 7-1. He attempted to withdraw the proposal, but the council opted to vote on it in order to have it on record.

Several new Ordinances were read and then the Council adjourned.

City Council - Feb. 10, 2004

by Carol Rousey, Observer

On the first order of business the Council voted 8-1 to oppose a bill in the Kansas House of Representatives that would change the current authority of cities to annex land. Their opposition is based the current authority of the city of annex land without a vote of the residents and they don't want that authority changed. The next three hours were spent on the proposed East Monroe Neighborhood plan and its zoning changes. The area is adjacent to the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic site at 15th and Monroe. Over 22 people testified during the public hearing, the majority opposed to the plan. The plan failed on a 3-6 vote. Council members voting for the plan were John Alcalá, Duane Pomeroy and Lisa Stubbs. In addition to rejecting the plan, the Council also defeated all the zoning changes. No other significant business was on the agenda.

LWV State Council Meeting, April 24th

Betsy is looking for 2 or 3 members to attend State Council meeting in Overland Park at the Holiday Inn on Saturday, April 24th. To volunteer please call Betsy at work, 233-9262, or e-mail her, brohleder@cjnetworks.com.



VOTE pins are in. Call Betsy to tell her how many you want to buy. They are \$10.00 each. We need every member to sell their fair share (3-5 pins). It is a good advertisement for our League and makes a good gift for a friend, work associate, etc. Betsy's number is 233-9262

From National League

Soon, the Senate leadership is expected to try again to force a final vote on the energy bill. As written, the energy bill undermines existing environmental protections, makes global warming worse, and fails to provide for needed energy conservation measures. Please act today to oppose the energy bill!

In November, the House approved passage of the conference report on the Energy Policy Act of 2003 (H.R. 6). But after continued pressure from concerned citizens around the country, final passage of the bill was successfully blocked in the Senate. Now, proponents of this deeply flawed bill are working again to secure enough votes to win passage in the Senate. It is vitally important to act quickly if we are to help stop this ill-conceived measure!

STATE FINANCE Lee Rowe

The Governor's tax proposals are getting short shrift in the Legislature but at least the ideas are being considered. There seems to be little legislative support for the Governor's three-pronged approach to provide additional funds for education with small increases in property, income and sales taxes. Legislative leaders appear to be waiting to see if Judge Bullock's ruling on education funding will be upheld by the Kansas Supreme Court. There is an effort in the Legislature to force Judge Bullock to issue a final order so the Legislature can attempt to override the ruling by appealing to the Supreme Court.

During the last few years Kansas has explored and used many one-time fixes to solve the yearly budget shortfall. This year the Governor and Legislature will have a difficult time finding any more of those fixes. An income tax surcharge, a sales or property tax increase that "sunset" this year would be ways of temporarily solving the funding crisis. These could be reduced or eliminated when tax revenues increase with an improved economy. Sitting in on committee hearings you begin to understand that much of legislation seems mundane but is obviously important to those it will affect.

Bills being heard before the House and Senate taxation committees last week covered public water supply fees, sales tax exemptions for various charitable organizations, sale and shipment of cigarettes to Kansas residents, suspension of vehicle dealer's license for failure to report and remit sales tax, income tax deduction for long-term care insurance premiums, collection of various delinquent taxes, and sales tax computation for occasional sales of motor vehicles.

Final decisions on funding the Kansas budget will come towards the end of the legislative session. This is a good time to let your legislators know your concerns. You can make a difference.

DEATH PENALTY Doris Slocombe

SB 355--Changes requirements for determining mental retardation for purposes of applying the death penalty. Final action will occur in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Monday, Feb. 16. SB 422 would impose life without parole in capital murder

cases, if sentence of death is not imposed. Kansas only has the option of a 50-yr. penalty, 40-yr. penalty, or death penalty. It has been shown that juries fear the criminal will get out of prison, thus opt for the death penalty vs. those with a time limit. In Senate Judiciary, for final action on Monday, Feb. 16. SB 158--TABLED. This bill provides for a two year moratorium on death penalty sentencing and executions. The Judiciary held hearings on Jan. 21. In that meeting, it was clear that the moratorium provisions did not have majority support in the committee. That left a study component as the only viable part of the bill. In addition, we kept hearing that because it is an election year legislators were hesitant to vote on this issue. Instead of working for a study via legislative action involving both chambers, a decision was made to seek a study from Judicial Council. This can be done through the Chair of the Judiciary Committee. That process is underway and study components are being formulated.

HIGHER EDUCATION Doris Slocombe

HB 2145 - The Senate Education Committee passed this bill Thursday and it will go to the floor of the Senate next week for final passage (it passed the House last session), and then on to the Governor for signature. This bill would allow children of undocumented immigrants to receive in-state tuition at Kansas colleges and universities if the child attended a Kansas High School for 3 years and either graduated or received a GED. What better way to provide our immigrant friends an opportunity to continue to work for a better life and to be productive residents and citizens of this country than to make education an opportunity they can truly realize! LWVK has been a supporter of this bill. (Janis sent us a legislative alert last weekend regarding the yes/no votes among the Senators so write to them regarding your views.) SB301 would allow moneys derived from tuition, fees and other charges to go into the university general fund and be used for both operational and capital expenditures; currently these fees can't be used for capital expenses. The bill will be heard in the Senate Education committee on Feb. 18.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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March 2004

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News from National League

Help America Vote Act

Voter participation is a vital part of the election process. In partnership with numerous organizations, the League is working to increase the number of people who are registered to vote, especially our nation's youngest voters.

Electronic Voting Machines and Voter-Verified Paper Trails (VVPT)

The League of Women Voters strongly supports full and equal voting rights for all eligible Americans, including persons with disabilities. The League also supports voter verification of ballots, including the requirement in the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) whereby the voter verifies the ballot before it is cast and counted. However, the League does not support proposals for a new requirement for paper-based voter verification the voter-verified paper trail (VVPT) system that would require Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting machines to provide an individual paper confirmation for each ballot for each voter to verify.

A VVPT requirement undermines voting access for people with disabilities or limited English proficiency, raises costs, fails to guarantee security, unnecessarily complicates the voting process, undermines federal certification standards, and slows the replacement of outdated voting machines.

State Day at the Capitol is
Thursday, March 11. Contact Lisa at the
state office, 234-5252 for details.