



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TOPEKA/SHAWNEE COUNTY

VOTER

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April 2006

- 1** *Annual Meeting - 9:00 am, YWCA* —Maggie Kelly: “Humor in our Lives.”
The cost is \$5 for a light continental breakfast. Please park south and come in the south door off of 13th & VanBuren. Follow the green line to the elevator and go to the first floor.
- 4** *Tuesday Topics - Lunch 11:30 am, TSCPL*
—Dr. Roy Menninger, “The History of Mental Health Treatment in Kansas.”
Our meal is soup, deli meats, condiments, homemade buns, cookie & tea/coffee/water.
- 11** *LWVT/SC Board Meeting - Old & new board joint meeting, Members welcome - Noon, O’Dooley’s, 1930 Westport Dr.*
(VOTER information is due for May/June VOTER. Send materials to **Carol Yoho:cyoho@cox.net**)
- 27** *VOICE Meeting - McFarland’s Restaraunt, Dinner 5:30 pm, Meeting 6:30 pm, “Member Input Into LWV Positions, 2006”*
Group discussion concerning LWV positions and other topics to discuss at VOICE meetings during the year.
- 29** *LWVK State Council - Lawrence High School, 19th and Louisiana,*
Each local League is entitled to three voting delegates, and each MAL Unit is entitled to one voting delegate. Members are invited and encouraged to attend. *Watch LWVK web site for details: **lwvk.org***

May 2006

- 2** *Tuesday Topics - Lunch 11:30 am, TSCPL*
“The Status of Women in Kansas” by Jana Mackey, Lobbyist for the National Organization for Women
- 6** *Garage Sale - at the home of Jan Waide. See also, p.12*

— For more May events, visit “Calendar,” lwvtsc.org

April Tuesday Topics

April 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. Checks payable to the Millennium Cafe.
If you need a ride to any League event, contact Betsy Rohleder.



PreZ SeZ...

— by *Jan Waide*

Our Place in Cyberspace

We are pleased to announce our new League Web Site! We have truly entered the 21st Century! Thanks to Carol Yoho's creativity and hard work we have our very own Web Site. It is my pleasure to now relinquish the rest of this column to Carol, who can give you all the details...

Our new web address is: **lwvtsc.org**. We encourage our members to visit the site soon, and often.

Based on a template used nationally, the local site includes topics common to many League web sites. These common topics include Mission, History, Call to Action, Online Voter Registration, links to national and state League sites, an online form for joining or renewing local membership, and an invitation to donate to our local organization.

In addition, the site contains important specifics of our League, including local Contact Information,

Prez Sez comments, an up-to-the-minute Events Calendar, and current/past issues of the VOTER (dating from the present to February 2004). Background information about our new study topic, Mental Health in Kansas, is soon to be published.

The site will continue to be a work in progress, with a goal of offering information to our members and the public about governmental issues and business of our local League.

Future additions to the site include plans to publish Local, State and National Positions, Board Briefs, News Releases, and sales materials for Fundraising.

We hope members with Internet access will be quickly able to find needed information online—local, state and national League activities—connected from our web site.

Our site is also our organization's digital face to the world. We welcome comments and suggestions for site improvements. — *Report by Carol Yoho*



Farewell to long-time member **Carol Rousey** was held at March Tuesday Topics. Carol and husband, Clyde, are moving to North Carolina.

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Vist: lwvtsc.org

Tuesday Topics, March

“Those Who Know: Consumers of Mental Health Services in KS”

a Panel Discussion of Service Consumers

Jo Ann:

Three members of Jo Ann's family faced mental illness. Her aunt was hospitalized in 1958. From a small farming community, the aunt found herself stigmatized by her illness upon her release, shunned by neighbors. She died in 1971, a virtual recluse within her community.

Jo Ann's son was diagnosed with Paranoid Schizophrenia when he was fourteen, hallucinating, hearing things, and unusually unhappy. Correct drug therapy has worked well for him, and he is happy living now in a group home in Emporia.

Jo Ann, herself, has suffered from bipolar disorder. Stormont-Vail's mental health facility has been there for her eight times. She was also hospitalized at the Topeka State Hospital at one time, where she was once put into five-point restraint: ankles, wrists, and waist bound in leather straps. She also had some very unpleasant experiences in a seclusion room for too-long periods of time. Currently Jo Ann has a support team consisting of herself, her case manager and five other mental health care professionals.

Steve:

Steve grew up in a traditional family, with an older sister. But he never felt "right." He had no compulsion to succeed. His childhood was bleak and disappointing. At seventeen he attempted suicide. He spent two months in a psychiatric unit where he felt the need to talk about his problems, but found no one interested in listening to him. He felt a condescending attitude on the part of his doctors. While there he learned to manipulate the system, telling his doctors what he perceived they



Above, from left: **Jo Ann Howley, Steven Bauer, Shannon Craig**

Jo Ann Howley, a native Kansan, attended Washburn University where she majored in Journalism. She is former President of Sunshine Connection, a consumer-run mental health organization in Topeka. She helped teach case management training for the KU School of Welfare, traveling and assisting in screening mental health consumers in nursing facilities to determine if consumers are candidates for community living. Jo Ann has worked part time for a National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) for four years and is active dealing with homelessness and suicide prevention.

Steven Baur is a native of West Des Moines, IA. He served in the U.S. Navy in the Persian Gulf War in 1990. He graduated from the University of Texas in Houston 1993, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. In 2005 he was elected Consumer Council Representative for NAMI Kansas. He is currently enrolled in the University of Phoenix.

Shannon Craig, wife and mother of four, lives in Olathe with husband, Mark, and son, Layne, age three. They also have three daughters, ages 17, 14 and 10. Shannon is on the Board for NAMI Johnson County and alternate Consumer Board Member for NAMI Kansas. She has chosen to focus on support for children and adolescents, hoping to incorporate them into community life. Shannon works from home in marketing and will soon enter training for Paralegal Certification, desiring to work in family law.

wanted to hear. Soon he was sent home, and was still disappointed with life. Low grades in high school kept him from college, so he joined the Navy to get out of Iowa. He became a Corpsman Medic—a good position for someone with depression, because he could self-medicate. It was a great situation—good times—and he

—continued on p. 4

Tuesday Topics, March

—continued from p. 3

had his first dating experiences. He was stationed on the West Coast and spent some time in the Persian Gulf during the war of 1990.

He learned to trust someone other than himself when he married and moved to Texas. There he went to college and did well academically. He became a trauma nurse, working the night shift in a trauma center and functioning well—until his wife sought a divorce.

Again he attempted suicide. He spent three weeks at the Menninger Clinic, again playing the system. Then he found himself homeless in Topeka, 1999 and 2000. Since becoming involved with NAMI Steve has been doing well, finding the support he needs in wrap-around care facilities.

Shannon:

Shannon also has bi-polar disorder. She finds help is available for those who have the desire and resources to stay well, but finds consumers may need guidance in finding the support options they need.

Personally, Shannon had no support system. Her mother committed suicide when Shannon was eight years old. By the age of sixteen Shannon had severe problems, but found no support from her father. They do not speak.

Shannon's mental health is currently stabilized with drug therapy, and problems arise only when she has trouble getting prescriptions for medication or has trouble paying for the medication she needs. She finds NAMI is an organization willing to walk consumers through the process of helping themselves and others.

Her personal interest is in helping children and adolescents in getting help. Consumers need a safe place, support, and acceptance.

She says, "We aren't bad people, but we have been stigmatized by society when we are branded as 'mentally ill'. Kansas has the desire and the ability to help. But individuals must do their part in working with the system. I find that I can not change anything that is past history, but I can control what happens to me today and tomorrow."

Q & A:

What does this panel perceive as Shawnee County's top five mental health needs?

1. Start by helping children, helping families.
2. Need funding to help consumers afford medication and care.
3. Need more beds in facilities and/or more temporary-care options.
4. Need community-based programs for consumers and their families.
5. Monitor the needs of veterans. They are next in line to lose help and are in great need.

Group homes should be more carefully monitored. Breakthrough Congregate on Golden Avenue in Topeka is the only good local care home. Their advantage is that they help teach residents to care for themselves...cook, clean, do laundry, etc. Each resident is required to be gone from the home between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. They, therefore, get out into the community, take classes and socialize.

Many group homes call themselves "boarding houses," thus avoiding state regulations.

NAMI Kansas is a state affiliate of the **National Alliance on Mental Illness**. They provide support, advocacy and education dedicated to improving the lives of families and individuals affected by brain disorders that manifest as mental illness. They collaborate with their colleagues in the mental health system to ensure the development and implementation of appropriate public policy and equitable distribution of public funds. They support and encourage medical research relating to brain disorders and participate in community research programs.

**NAMI Kansas, P.O. Box 675, Topeka, KS,
66601-0675, 800-539-2660,
NAMIKansas@nami.org, www.nami.org**



Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services

Mental Health Care Policy

Mental Health General Information

www.srskansas.org/hcp/MH/mhgeneralinfo.htm

The mission of the department of Mental Health in the Division of Health Care Policy is to provide individuals and families who experience mental illness alone or in combination with substance abuse problems, the support they need in order to achieve their personal goals.

The mission is implemented with the following values:

Medicaid:

1. That people have the right to make informed choices about their life based on their individual preferences;
2. That consumer and family voice is essential and directive;
3. That people deserve effective state-of-the-science treatment;
4. That treatment must be respectful and empowering to the individual;
5. That with effective treatment and services, people can experience a personal process of recovery from mental illness; and
6. That services be provided in the least restrictive, safe, flexible, and accessible environment with a focus on community-based supports.


Over the past 14 years the state has moved mental health services from a primarily institutional based system, to a system that seeks to provide services through community settings. This effort has resulted in increased funding for the development of community-based programs and services, as well as increased coordination, collaboration, and integration between community mental health

centers (CMHCs) and state hospitals.

The primary local coordinating agency for community-based mental health services is the licensed CMHC. There are 27 CMHCs in Kansas and two licensed affiliates. The licensed affiliates specialize in services to children and their families. There is a greater emphasis on the delivery of services to persons with the most serious illnesses—the target populations. In Kansas, our target populations are adults with severe and persistent mental illness and children with serious emotional disturbance.

The current community-based mental health service system in Kansas also includes:

- 3 Adult Family Homes;
- 20 Consumer-Run Organizations;
- Over 3,000 Kansas & national self-help groups;
- 26 Residential Care Facilities;
- Two Private Psychiatric Hospitals;
- 11 Nursing Facilities for Mental Health; and
- Numerous mental health advocacy organizations and statewide mental health associations.

In addition to the services noted above, the Division of Health Care Policy oversees the operation of three State Mental Health Hospitals (SMHH). These are Larned State Hospital, Osawatimie State Hospital, and Rainbow Mental Health Facility. The primary goal of SMHH placement is the stabilization of consumers who are experiencing acute symptoms in a safe and therapeutic environment. The combined budgeted bed capacity for these SMHHs is 337. 

Evolution of Community Mental Health Centers in Kansas

The evolution and development of CMHCs in Kansas is an outgrowth of the Menninger story and psychiatry. The 1920s produced Freud and Psychoanalysis and the emerging belief, particularly among social workers, that environment played an important role in Mental Health. The interdisciplinary practice as a team involving medicine, psychology, social work, nursing and occupational therapy in treating mental illness evolved.

During the 1940s all Kansas mental facilities received niggardly appropriations. Conditions at Topeka State Hospital (TSH) in 1948 were: 2000 patients, five doctors, two nurses, one psychologist, and 120 aides. TSH was described as having many rooms lacking lighting and heat, with obsolete and hazardous wiring, dark and gloomy wards, and having wooden stairs that were fire-traps.

World War II produced many psychiatric casualties, and post-WW II saw a recognition of the need for treatment of the mentally ill. This recognition resulted in the Institute of Mental Health in The National Institutes of Health, the passage of the Hill Burton Act, and the development by Menninger of the Winter General Hospital training program. By 1948 Winter General (WG) had 1700 employees, remodeled buildings, a program for training in psychology, social work, and psychiatric nursing. WG became a model for the entire VA system as a training facility and from then on all 69 of the constructed VA hospitals had a psychiatric unit. Almost overnight Topeka and WG became the citadel of American Psychiatry. Of WG's 1400 beds, 900 were psychiatric. This program expanded to TSH where buildings were remodeled and programs initiated where, with a greatly enlarged staff of physicians, residents, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and ancillary therapists, students of all aspects of the men-

tal health residential program were trained. A 30-bed residential program for children was also initiated in a separate building. Kansas was a mecca for Psychiatry and treatment of the mentally ill and as such became a national model.

With the advent of expanded knowledge and understanding of the mentally ill and the development of psychotropic medications there was less need for long term hospital care and patients were returning to their communities. Therefore the 1950s saw the inception of the mental health centers in the community. An example would be the incorporation of the Mental Health Center of East Central Kansas (MHCECK) in November 1959 as a not for profit corporation located in Emporia, Kansas for the purpose of studying and promoting mental health in East Central Kansas. There were 21 incorporators who were a mix of citizens: attorneys, judges, physicians, business men, teachers, nurses, and housewives. The center was governed by a Board of Citizens, as it is to this day. The rural areas had little or no service agencies at this time, so CMHCs became a primary/only service agency, and with the advent of Federal grants in the late 60s and early 70s, these individual centers developed as regional CMHCs servicing a catchment area of counties. The core CMHC was in a community of some population and satellite offices and services were set up in each county in the catchment area. These federal grants called for comprehensive services which included adults, children, seniors, acute and chronic conditions (every DSM diagnosis). The service requirements were: Prevention, Treatment Assessments, Aftercare, Referral, and Continuity of Care Services regardless of ability to pay, which is a cornerstone of the CMHCs. There is a continuing effort to meet the goals of Accessibility, Acceptability, and Availability.

CMHCs have grown in staff and service demands

LWVK STUDY: *Mental Health in Kansas*

with the deinstitutionalization (1955) of state psychiatric hospital beds and the advent of Medicare and Medicaid. The impetus toward deinstitutionalization has taken place nationwide. This has been fueled by the IMD exclusion which bars Medicaid payment for psychiatric hospitalization for severe mental illness for ages 21 through 65. Medicaid will pay for hospitalization in a psychiatric ward of a general hospital or in a nursing home. The consequences of Medicaid IMD exclusion are staggering for the severely mentally ill. The United States has lost effectively 93% of its state psychiatric hospital beds since deinstitutionalization began in 1955. The race for Medicaid dollars has in fact reduced the total number of state psychiatric hospital patients to less than 60,000 today, compared to 500,000 in 1965 when Medicaid was enacted. In Kansas we have Ossawatimie and Larned State Hospitals still in operation. In the early 1990s the state recommended that the focus for mental health care be in CMHCs rather than in state institutions. The psychiatric wards of general hospitals and private care psychiatric hospitals have diminished greatly since private insurers do not pay on a parity for psychiatric treatment as they do on other treatments.

At the present the Medicaid funding for Kansas CMHCs is over 60% of their revenue. The remainder comes from county, state, and fees for service. This funding pattern is reflected in the national picture also. In 1962, for example, Federal dollars comprised just 2% of the total funds in the mental illness treatment system, with state and local governments contributing the remaining 98%. By 1994, however, the federal share had increased to 62% of the total money spent.

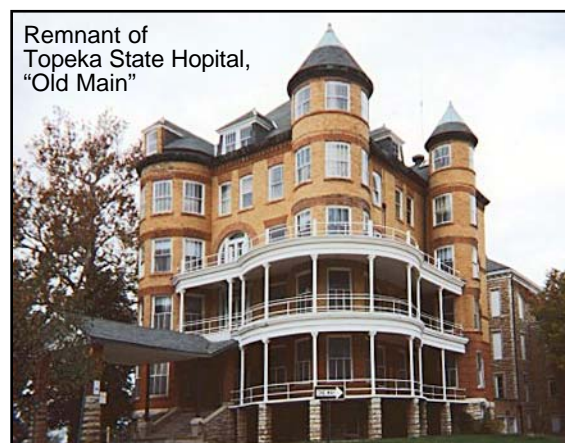
These figures are a stark statement regarding the state and location of services for the mentally ill. CMHCs of Kansas are the providers of services

which are grounded in our local communities but are shaped by their dominant revenue sources, i.e. federal and state. The CMHCs have Boards made up of citizens from each county plus several at-large members. They remain quasi-public institutions and in recent years consumers of service have been added to their Boards.

by **Jacqueline L. Heckman-James, MSW**
Washington University, St Louis, November 2005

Resources:

1. A Comprehensive Community Mental Health Program, by Robert H. Felix, M.D., Director of NIMH, Bethesda, Md, from *M. H. & Social Welfare* by Robert H. Felix, et. al. 1961, Columbia University Press, N. Y.
2. *The Chronic Mental Patient II*, ed by Walter Menninger, M.D. and Gerald Hannah, Ph.D., American Psychiatric Press, Washington D.C., 1987.
3. *Outline of History of Mental Illness and Societal Response Kansas 1920s – 1950s*, by Jules Cohen, retired, Director of High Plains CMHC, Treatment Advocacy Center, 1999.
4. *True Parity Means Eliminating IMD Exclusion*, by Bruce Rheinstein, J.D., Policy Analyst, Treatment Advocacy Center, 1999.



Remnant of
Topeka State Hospital,
"Old Main"

Shawnee Co. Health Agency Community Health Center Annual Board Meeting

January 24, 2006, by *Teresa Stambaugh*
Rosemary Williamson also attended

Ten Board Members were present at this meeting. Health Officer's Report: Dr. Rummons reported that the 2005-2006 flu season has been slow. CDC has issued a directive not to use 2 specific drugs for influenza A as it is resistant to these medications. There have been no reported cases of the Avian Flu in the western hemisphere. It is however on the increase elsewhere. Pertusis was on the rise in 2005. A new vaccine is available for adult immunization in the DTP combination. ER's are administering this vaccine if patient's are in need of a tetanus vaccine. MRSA is also on the rise.

Finance Committee Report: The new Aging outstanding balance is \$246,560 with a goal of reduce the outstanding balance to \$200,000 by 12/06. The reimbursement rate for Medicaid has increased to \$108.62 from 105.36 per encounter. Board approved increasing the minimum on in-house lab tests from \$3.00 to \$8.00 per test. SCHA has decided to not participate in Value-Blue a new product introduced by Blue Cross Blue Shield for the uninsured. They plan to revisit this in a few months.

Governance Committee: Sylvia Herrmann, has been nominated as CHC Board Chairman for 2006. Commissioner Kane will serve another term. Consumer members were asked to write a short paragraph regarding what CHC means to them as a client. Sylvia Herrmann presented her paragraph.

Executive Committee Report: KAMU (Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved) fees were increased from \$300.00 to \$2,370.00. Debbie McArdle reported that KAMU has been a tremendous help to them in research, grants, and other support. It was recommended that a letter be sent to KAMU expressing concern for the large annual increase but to request approval of payment for the fees by the county commissioners. Seven new computers will be installed at Hillcrest Clinic on March 7. Management recommended salary increases for staff ARNP's. The Board moved that additional information be obtained about local ARNP salaries and that a recommendation

then be taken to the finance committee. Some discussion occurred on the Planning Audit. It was stated that the audit questioned the fee collection policy. A diabetic collaborative incentive program will begin 2-6-06. This is an outcome based program supported by grants, and has been used at other community health centers. Business Plan 2005 Accomplishments year end status report was distributed to Board members. Recommendation made on renewal grant applications were not addressed in the applications as they had previously been submitted. A response for these recommendations were sent under separate cover and were not made available to the committee or others in attendance.

Misc. Business: Legislative Day for CHC will be at the Capital on 2-14-06. It was reported that a physician from Topeka has expressed some interest in the Medical Director position. Application has not been made by this physician and there are no other applicants.

City Council

2-7 to 3-7, 2006, by *Joe D. Sargent*

Since my last report on the Council's meeting on 1/31/06, there has been movement on a number of issues.

Probably the most important happening is that acting city manager Neil Dobler will relinquish his duties on 3/13/06, and Norton Bonaparte will assume the position of City Manager.

The redevelopment of the College Hill area has occupied the Council's attention for the month of February. On 2/7/06, the Council members voted 6 to 3 in favor of a redevelopment agreement with the Washburn-Lane Parkway Renovation, L.L.C and an ordinance authorizing the redevelopment. At that time, public comment expressed considerable discomfort in the use of eminent domain against two area business owners with whom the developers were in negotiation. The following week, Neil Dobler removed a resolution empowering the City to use eminent domain to condemn property involved in the project. Apparently, the two business owners in question reached satisfactory agreements with the developers so that eminent domain would not be used. On 2/2/06, Mr. Dobler withdrew from the Council's agenda a proposal to set a

date for a public hearing to adopt a plan for the area's redevelopment since the Topeka Planning Commission needed to consider the proposal on 2/27/06 before the Council took further action. The Shawnee County Commissioners approved without a dissenting vote on 2/27/06 the proposed Tax Increment Financing District for the College Hill Project. The Council on 2/29/06 voted to have a public hearing on the Project on 3/28/06.

Another topic occupying the Council's attention was the City's Zoo. On 2/8/06, the Council made the Topeka Zoo a department instead of being under Parks and Recreation. The head of the Zoo will now report directly to the City Manager. Approval of the Topeka Zoo's master plan was obtained on 2/25/06 by Mike Coker, the Zoo's director, but an agreement between the City and the Friends of the Topeka Zoo (FOTZ) was sent back to committee. The agreement outlines expectations of both organizations and would commit FOTZ to conduct a capital campaign. The Council approved on 3/7/06 \$1,800,000 to expand the Animals and Man Building at the Zoo. This is the first project in the Zoo's master plan. Some Council Members raised concerns about the continuing relationship between the City and FOTZ.

On 2/28/06, the Council voted in favor of measures to replace the Topeka Boulevard Bridge at the cost of approximately \$44,000,000. Also approval was given on 3/7/06 to proceed with building an overpass over the Union Pacific Railroad on Northwest Lower Silver lake Road at a cost of \$5,540,000. At the same Council meeting, Members voted authorization of the issuance of \$10,400,00 in Star Bonds for improvements at Heartland Park. Other concerns coming before the Council were issues around the handling of sex offenders and the development of the Kansas River Front.

Shawnee County Commission

January 23, 2006, by Nancy Shaughnessy

Jan Waide, current President of LWV recruited me to attend the Shawnee County commission meetings every other Monday and report back to the Membership through the newsletter. Commissioner Miller, in his usual droll style, upon noticing my attendance, asked me if I had drawn the "short straw." for the League that year.

Anne Freeze, Shawnee County Health Department requested that the Health Department be allowed to solicit proposals to contract for the services of a pharmacy to participate in the Public Health Service Drug Pricing Program. Request was approved and Ms. Freeze indicated she thought the process would take approx. 60 days.

Betsy Gillespie, Director, Shawnee County Dept. of Corrections, requested the appointment of 15 members to a newly created public relations Board. Motion approved.

Final item was the Commission approving a 2% increase in salaries for themselves, Department heads and unclassified employees. Motion was approved.

February 16, 2006, by Jan Waide

Betsy Gillespie, Director of the Department of Corrections, requested permission to testify at the legislature on HB 2893, which would force health care providers to accept the Medicaid rate for medical services to incarcerated offenders (adult and juvenile). Currently, law enforcement agencies (LEAs) across Kansas are paying private pay rates.

In three months in 2005, Shawnee County Department of Corrections paid \$92,000 for medical care for prisoners. If this bill would have been in place that bill would have been \$20,000, a savings of \$72,000 in just 3 months. Statewide, they estimate that HB 2893 would provide a 59% savings to correctional agencies.

In some counties, the LEA releases the prisoner while they are hospitalized so that the county does not have to pay the bill for him/her. It then becomes a public safety issue as well as an economic one. The Kansas Hospital Association will not oppose the bill.

The possible down side to the bill is that it may increase provider resistance to serving inmates

February 23, 2006, by Jan Waide

Neil Dobler, Acting City Manager, appeared in regard to two issues: 45th and Croco Rd. intersection and Washburn Lane College Hill area redevelopment.

First, there is a problem with the agreement between the City and the County on the improvement of the intersection in question. It was agreed that they needed a 30 day extension on the agreement to get everything worked out.

On the redevelopment of the College Hill area, the developers were also in attendance. Mr. Dobler said that City staff is very impressed with this group. They have now added a "sunset clause" to the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement, as per the previous request of the County Commissioners. Caution was urged in the use of TIF funding as it is not a bottomless pit.

The County Commissioners gave their approval of the Washburn Lane College Hill project.

February 28, 2006, by Mary Ann Breitbart

The Facilities manager, Rich Davis, was asked to obtain a third estimate for plumbing repair work for two restrooms and to forego the formal bidding process. The Parks and Recreation Department requested to be allowed to solicit bids for golf course maintenance.

Also membership in the Western Nursery and Landscape Association was approved.

Formal bidding procedures were waived and the proposal from Atwood Brush and Tree Cleaning for the removal of cedar trees at a former landfill was accepted. The Commission requested that the Refuse and Public Works Departments look into a better land use for the former landfill.

Requests for additional temporary positions for the Appraiser's Office and Public Works were approved. The Appraiser's office needs two positions during the tax appeals process and Public Works has fifteen positions for spring and summer help.

The Commission passed the Expocentre request for a new replacement valve in the ice plant. This was

needed for a July performance of Champions On Ice.

March 2, 2006, by Jan Waide

Consideration of a letter from an attorney for Target requesting a time extension regarding the tax exemption for Target for 2006. The agreement with the city, the county and Target was that a tax exemption would be granted on the basis that Target would maintain 600 full-time jobs or the hourly equivalent for employees and would increase the tax base. Target has not met that requirement. They had 600 employees but now have 493, mainly due to technological advances, according to Target. Now Target wants to be able to include people employed in contractual arrangements.

Their request was denied. The denial of their request results in a tax bill of \$2.86 million being due to the county.

John Knight, Director of Shawnee County Parks and Recreation, requested permission to respond to a Request for Proposals (RFP) from the City of Topeka for grounds maintenance at Cypress Ridge Golf Course. Permission granted to send a letter to the City Manager, with a copy to the Mayor, offering to manage all the public golf courses in Shawnee County, which would include more than maintenance.

Currently, city workers maintain Cypress Ridge. The city wants to contract it out to, hopefully, save money. Currently, the course manager is a city employee. The city golf course does not make any money at this point. The county golf courses all made money last year.

March 14, 2006 Board Briefs

Eight members were present for the March 14 board meeting. They shared:

- Preparation for card sales at National Convention;
- Follow-up with new and prospective members;
- Legislation being discussed inside and outside the legislature;
- That the next LWVK VOTER will feature LWVTSC.ORG;
- About upcoming Mental Health VOICE, Annual, and Tuesday Topics meetings.
- April 11 at O'Dooley's will be a joint meeting of the old and new boards.

- April 27 meeting at McFarlands will invite member input about LWV positions and other topics to discuss at VOICE meetings during the year.
- LWVT-SC gets three delegates to State Council April 29 in Lawrence; anyone can go. Let Jan know if interested.
- A garage sale will be held May 6 at Jan Waide's. Saleable stuff & workers are needed.
- June Tuesday Topics will be at the YWCA; the Library is unavailable that day.
- July Tuesday Topics would fall on the Fourth; it is cancelled.

— by **Edith Bronson**,
LWVT-SC Secretary



Judicial Independence

by Janis McMillen

I want to update you on the Judicial Independence activity that I've been involved in as a League representative. A coalition of organizations formed late last summer to discuss legislation that was introduced last spring, and again during this session, to change our current merit selection system for Supreme Court Justices, Appeals Court Judges, and some District judges. Our coalition is now formally known as Kansans for Simple Justice. The derivation of the name is that justice should be pure, should be straightforward and the simplest way to assure that is to retain merit selection and keep politics out of our courts. And when you see the brochure, you will note that the "blue hand of justice" is necessary to maintain a balance.

We scored at least a minor victory when HCR 5033 was narrowly defeated in the House Judiciary Committee. This bill would do away with the non-partisan Supreme Court Nominating Commission for Supreme Court justices and replace it with gubernatorial appointment confirmed by the senate. There are other similar bills still pending in the legislature that may or may not make it out this session. However, there is a contingent of legislators who feel very strongly that changes need to be made in the selection system for Supreme and Appeals Court Judges. These feelings and actions stem primarily from the court's ruling on the school finance case, and also on a recent death penalty case, which resulted in declaring our death penalty unconstitutional. And of course, the Supreme Court still has the school finance case. So depending on what the legislature eventually gets around to doing in the way of school finance, there may be more animosity toward the Court by the time summer rolls around. Thus, its important that the public become more informed, sooner rather than later.

We have been busy raising money - though we need to raise a lot more money! We had brochures prepared by a local PR/communications firm that is helping us put a campaign together. The brochures will be very helpful for fund raising as well as bringing more organizations and individuals into the coalition.

You may have read the article in the recent *Kansas Voter* which was intended to refresh the memories of Leaguers across the state and to reiterate our position on merit selection. My other motive in writing the article was also to prepare League members to assist in a state wide education effort on merit selection. I hope you will share the information on Kansans for Simple Justice. I would be glad to talk further with any of you who have an interest in the topic. If your League would be willing to talk with groups in your community, we have plenty of information to give you, I can come and assist and we can pair you with an attorney or judge to share the presentation, if you prefer. And I hope each League will have a speaker come talk about this issue.



**Janis
McMillen**
State League
President

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VOTER, April 2006:

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



CAROL YOHO, EDITOR
 3013 SW QUAIL CREEK DR
 TOPEKA KS 66614-4131



5 blank cards
 + envelopes for \$5.
 Contact Betsy Rohleder

Mark your calendar:

Volunteer:

Fri., May 5 (setup), Sat., May 6 (sale)

Annual LWV Garage Sale

@ Jan Waide's—1618 SW 28th St.—Details in May VOTER



Mark Prices on Each of Your Items

Please bring clothing on hangers

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 \$ _____

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Please send to:
 Sybil Wiegman, Treasurer
 2805 SW Tall Grass Dr.
 TOPEKA, KS 66614-6026
 785-478-1679

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