



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF TOPEKA/SHAWNEE COUNTY  
*VOTER*

President: Jan Waide  
1618 SW 28th St.  
785-233-7008 (h)

Membership: Nancy Whiffen  
215 N. Broadmoor  
785-235-2104 (h)

Voter Editor: Pat Dick  
3371 SW Osborn Rd.  
785-272-8461 (o)

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## DECEMBER 2006

- 5 Tuesday Topics - Lunch 11:30 am, TSCPL  
Speaker will be our own Pat Stinson, "Hidden Powers" - The real scoop on some of our First Ladies.  
*Menu: Baked Ham, AuGratin potatoes, salad, cookies, tea or water*
- 12 LWVT/SC Board Meeting –All members welcome.  
Noon, O'Dooley's, 1930 Westport Dr. (north of Petsmart on Westport Dr.)

## JANUARY 2007

- 2 Tuesday Topics - Lunch 11:30 am, TSCPL  
Speaker and menu to be announced
- 9 LWVT/SC Board Meeting –All members welcome.  
Noon, O'Dooley's, 1930 Westport Dr. (north of Petsmart on Westport Dr.)
- 18 V.O.I.C.E. meeting –Mental Health Study  
5:30-8 pm, O'Dooley's, 1930 Westport Dr. (north of Petsmart on Westport Dr.)

*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...

## PREZ SEZ Consolidation NO, But Cooperation MAYBE!

It was a very small crowd (about half our usual attendance for this event) that attended the Governmental Issues Dinner on November 16<sup>th</sup> at the Ramada.

Our invited guests for the evening were the County Commission, including the new Commissioner Elect, and the City Council plus the Mayor and the City Manager. The number of guests accepting our invitation was also quite slim. But, perhaps, we drew the cream of the crop. Mayor Bunten, Councilman John Nave, Commissioner Marice Kane and her soon-to-be successor, Shelly Buhler of Rossville, all expressed a real interest in cooperation between the city and the county.

Ms. Buhler, understandably, has great loyalty to all the small towns in the outlying areas of Shawnee County, such as Silver Lake, Rossville, Willard, Auburn, etc. but appeared open to looking at possible opportunities for collaboration between Topeka and the county which did not pose a threat to the autonomy of those towns. She expressed distinct opposition to the consolidation of the Topeka Police Department and the Shawnee County Sheriff's Department, stating that all the outlying municipalities have trained law enforcement coverage.

The panel of guests was questioned about the current attempt to consolidate the two Information Technology departments. Ms. Kane and Mr. Nave both agreed to try to keep it moving forward. The reasons for the failure to consolidate the two Parks and Recreation departments a year ago was not very clear. But it appears to be a dead issue at this time.

Ms. Kane was congratulated for her successful effort to call the two separate Planning Commissions to meet together to consider the planning for growth in both Topeka and Shawnee County. She explained the single issue event that caused them to separate and go their separate ways a couple of years ago. Mr. Nave pledged his cooperation and support for joint planning.

Ms. Kane also explained the many problems with trying to consolidate law enforcement: differing opinions on firearms, uniforms, and union contracts. Mayor Bunten provided us with an update on his program to clean up our city.

All in all it was an informative event. It was encouraging to listen to people who were agreeing to cooperate with each other. We need to support their efforts in that regard and encourage the other local leaders, who did not attend, to participate in cooperative efforts.

As always, stand up and speak out for good government!

Jan Waide

*Jan Waide*



## OBSERVER REPORTS

FROM

County Commission by Jan Waide

November 2, 2006

- County employees presented United Way a check for \$47,500.
- Department of Corrections asked permission to purchase four chain-link exercise enclosures for segregation of dangerous populations (gang members, etc.) Prisoners are urged to go outside for exercise unless below 32 degrees, unless there is rain, snow or extreme heat. Exercise must be offered and they can accept or not but are strongly urged to go outside. The department has funds available for this purchase.

November 9, 2006

- A request from the Humane Society for a tax exemption on a piece of property bequeathed to them was approved.
- A request by Judge Dan Mitchell for the use of court rooms on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2006 for National Adoption Day was approved. Judge Mitchell has 7 adoptions scheduled for that day.

Meeting schedules were rearranged to accommodate the canvass of the general election votes and the Thanksgiving holiday.



November 14, 2006

## BOARD BRIEFS

*By Edith Bronson, Secretary*

The LWVT-SC Board met at noon November 14 at O'Dooley's with 10 members present. The October minutes were approved and the Treasurer's report was filed for audit.

Members learned that:

- State Mental Health Study consensus questions are on the LWVK website. The questions will be printed in the VOTER;
- Fannie Mandelbaum and Winnie Crapson are 50-year members as of 2007.
- Judith Corbett is a new member.
- Leaguers helped 38 Kids Voting Kansas at two polling places.
- Nancy Shaughnessy has resigned as Tuesday Topics chair.
- Bob Harder will arrange for Tuesday Topics speakers through this League year.
- Seven Topeka League members attended the all-day board training Nov. 11 at Aboud's arranged by State League with a National staffer as trainer.
- Hosts were assigned for Topeka Council and County Commissioners at the Governmental Issues Dinner.
- Options for schedules, dates, sites, and speakers were for the Annual Meeting were discussed.
- Treasurer Sybil Weigman and Georgia Sandlin were named to the 2008-2009 Budget Committee. Sybil will recruit an Audit Committee.
- VOICE meeting for State Mental Health consensus was scheduled for Jan. 18

# Tuesday Topics, December

## Vision, Beliefs, and Intentions

The principles that guide our organization...

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political membership organization which:

- acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels
- builds citizen participation in the democratic process.
- engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters Education Fund is a nonpartisan public policy educational organization which:

builds citizen participation in the democratic process

- studies key community issues at all governmental levels in an unbiased manner
- enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

We believe in:

- respect for individuals the value of diversity
- the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities

We will:

- act with trust, integrity and professionalism
- operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public

take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership acknowledge our heritage as we seek our path to the future.

Tuesday Topics are held in room JCM 101B, across from the Millennium Cafe at the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library, unless otherwise indicated..

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](#).

*Speaker will be our own Pat Stinson, “Hidden Powers” - The real scoop on some of our First Ladies*



# LWVUS NEWS

## THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE STUDY – CONSENSUS QUESTIONS

Community Mental Health Centers have the primary responsibility for meeting the needs of all Kansans accessing the public mental health system. The Community Mental Health Centers are the single point of entry for publicly-funded mental health services (inpatient and outpatient) and serve as a safety net for Kansas citizens. How is this system working, including strengths, barriers to the consumer, and gaps in service? What changes, if any, are needed?

What are some strategies to prevent or decrease problems among the mentally ill, such as homelessness, incarceration/criminalization, unmet physical health needs, and failure to access mental health treatment when it is needed?

The demand for acute psychiatric treatment provided by the state mental health hospitals has been increasing over the last four years. At times, the actual hospital census has exceeded budgeted census, placing a serious strain on hospital resources. This problem has been addressed by implementing system-wide census management, which focuses on diversion and discharge—a solution that one county attorney has called “treat ‘em and street ‘em.” How could this problem be addressed more effectively?

One half of the total funding that supports Community Mental Health Centers and one-fourth of the total funding that supports State Mental Hospitals is derived from Medicaid. In view of budget limitations, how should the state allocate funding for mental health services, including issues related to Medicaid Reform? Some recommendations from professional organizations are:

- A) Maximize Medicaid payments
- B) Provide supplementary state funding to adequately support state mental health hospitals
- C) Fund services demonstrating positive recovery and resilience
- D) Implement full insurance parity for mental health care

The President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health—Goals and Recommendations are attached. By Executive Order 04-10, the Governor of Kansas designated the Governor’s Mental Health Services Planning Council to be the coordinating body in Kansas for utilizing the New Freedom Commission Report. Should the League support this document?

## THE PRESIDENT’S NEW FREEDOM COMMISSION REPORT: ACHIEVING THE PROMISE—TRANSFORMING MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN AMERICA

### GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### GOAL 1

AMERICANS UNDERSTAND THAT MH IS ESSENTIAL TO OVERALL HEALTH

Advance and implement a national campaign to reduce the stigma of seeking care and a national strategy for suicide prevention. Address mental health with the same urgency as physical health.

#### GOAL 2

MENTAL HEALTH CARE IS CONSUMER AND FAMILY DRIVEN

2.1 Develop an individualized plan of care for every adult with serious mental illness and child with serious emotional disturbance.

2.2 Involve consumers and families fully in orienting the mental health system towards recovery.

2.3 Align relevant Federal programs to improve access and accountability for mental health services.

2.4 Create a comprehensive State Mental Health Plan.

2.5 Protect and enhance the rights of people with mental illness.

#### GOAL 3

DISPARITIES IN MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE ELIMINATED

3.1 Improve access to quality care that is culturally competent.

3.2 Improve access to quality care in rural and geographically remote regions.

## GOAL 4

### EARLY MENTAL SCREENING, ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL TO SERVICES ARE COMMON PRACTICES

4.1 Promote the mental health of young children.

4.2 Improve and expand school mental health programs.

4.3 Screen for co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders and link with integrated treatment.

4.4 Screen for mental disorders in primary health care, across the lifespan, and connect to treatment and supports.

## GOAL 5

### EXCELLENT MENTAL HEALTH CARE IS DELIVERED AND RESEARCH IS ACCELERATED

5.1 Accelerate research to promote recovery and resilience, and ultimately to cure and prevent mental illness.

5.2 Advance evidence-based practices using dissemination and demonstration projects and create a private/public partnership to guide their implementation.

5.3 Improve and expand the workforce providing evidence-based mental health services and supports.

5.4 Develop the knowledge base in four understudied areas: mental health disparities, long-term effects of medications, trauma, and acute care.

## GOAL 6

### TECHNOLOGY IS USED TO ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND INFORMATION

6.1 Use health technology and telehealth to improve access and coordination of mental health care, especially for Americans in remote areas or in underserved populations.

6.2 Develop and implement integrated electronic health record and personal health information systems.

## Local Mental Health Study on the Mental Health Delivery System: LWV Topeka/Shawnee County

VOICE MEETING on September 28, 2006

Committee Members: Dottie and Bob Harder, Carol Jory, Judy Moler and Maryanna Quilty

Judy contacted Valeo for annual report and budget information. She received a copy of a report that was in the paper. No budget information was received from Valeo.

Maryanna Quilty: Interview with Stormont Vail Psychiatric Hospital Provider:

Needs:

- Longer term care
- Two weeks wait for screening at MH Center

Only two state hospitals which are full most of the time

Rescue Mission: MH/MI population runs 38-70%

Barry Feaker would like to see one MH Center complex like Rescue Mission with longer term care...and a safe place.

Dottie and Bob Harder interviewed Glenn Yancey at Breakthrough House. He felt there was:

- Need for acute care
- 1/3 of Board is consumer
- Need to pass "willing provider" legislation

No one is currently held responsible

Other interviews conducted by the Harders were:

Kirk Lowery interview:

Kansas NAMI paper gives the state an overall rating of "F" for MH care. Mental Health Association has written a rebuttal

Capitol City High

- Privatization has been a detriment.

Records to follow child, patient, client. This should be a priority

Others: MI problems with returning vets and no treatment centers. Breakthrough House is working with Colmery O'Neill on this.

MI people falling through the cracks.

Before the next VOICE meeting Maryanna will interview staff person at Valeo; Judy will interview Mark Hood and Vic Miller; and the Harders will interview Ted Ensley

8.....	IWVUA.....
5-7.....	Observer Reports.....
.....	Tuesday Topics.....
3.....	Board Briefs.....
2.....	Prez Sez.....
1.....	Calendar.....

**VOTER, October 2006**

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Patty Dick, Editor  
 3371 SW Osborn Rd.  
 Topeka, KS 66614



5 blank cards + envelopes for \$5

Contact Betsy Rohleder

**YES!**

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

\_\_\_\$53 for 1-year Individual Membership \_\_\_\$75 for a 1-year Household Membership

\_\_\_\$85 for a 1-year Sustaining Membership \_\_\_\$25 for a 1-year Student (ages 18- Membership

\_\_\_I am unable to join the League at this time, but enclose a contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please send to:

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Sybil Wiegman, Treasurer

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

2805 SW Tall Grass Dr.

Phone (hm) \_\_\_\_\_ (wk) \_\_\_\_\_

TOPEKA, KS 66614-6026

E-Mail (for Action Alerts) \_\_\_\_\_

785-478-1679

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