



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TOPEKA/SHAWNEE COUNTY
VOTER

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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.

Calendar:

November 2006

7 General Election Day– VOTE!

***Kids Vote Kansas-West Side Christian Church and
Southern Hills Mennonite Church***

Tuesday Topics - Lunch 11:30 am, TSCPL

*Speaker will be Nancy Perry, Exec. Director of Topeka United Way
“Report on Recent Survey on Community Resources”*

MENU: Sweet/Sour Chicken---Rice---Salad---Cake---Beverages

***11 State Training for Board Members-Aboud’s at Western Hills,
8533 SW 21st***

***14 LWVT/SC Board Meeting -All members welcome.
Noon at O’Dooley’s, 1930 Westport Dr. (north of Petsmart)***

16 Governmental Issues Dinner-Ramada Inn

*LWV-TSC will host County Commissioners & City Council Members
Ramada Inn Grand Ballroom-\$25 per person.*

Payment will be accepted at the door or can be mailed to Sybil Weigman, 2805 SW Tallgrass, Topeka,
Must RSVP by noon on Monday, Nov. 13 to Chelsey Smith at smithchel@yahoo.com or 785-213-5456.



***PreZ Sez...*PREZ SEZ Get Out The VOTE**

As I write this we are only three weeks from the general election. Without looking at a calendar, you know it is coming soon because the political advertisements, in every form of media, are increasing in numbers and becoming more hostile and attacking in tone. The political scientists are divided as to whether negative ads work to the candidate's favor or not. Our concern must center on whether they turn people off to the entire elective process, thus reducing, even further, the number of people voting!

Our voter turnout, in county, state and nation, is already pathetic. The official primary election turnout in Shawnee County was 24.88% of the registered voters. Statewide, a whopping 18.15% of the state's registered voters managed to cast a primary election ballot. That means that almost 82% of the state's voters allowed 18.15% to dictate who would be allowed to be a candidate in the general election scheduled for Nov. 7th. This is probably not the democracy that the Founding Fathers envisioned over 200 years ago.

What can we do about it? We must constantly beat the drum that every citizen should vote and that every vote counts! We have been busy this fall registering voters and we must continue those efforts. We must talk to our friends, relatives and acquaintances and urge them to vote. We must assist shut-ins by helping them achieve advance ballots or vote at the polls. Please offer to take your neighbors with you to the polls. Write letters to the editor urging everyone to vote. Instead of saying "Have a nice day" as a farewell say "please be sure to vote". Wear your vote pin.

And always, stand up and speak out for good government! — by *Jan Waide*

***PreZ Sez...**

SAVETHE DATE! *Thursday, November 16, 5:30 p.m. Governmental Issues Dinner
Ramada Inn, Grand Ballroom \$25 per person.*

Payment will be accepted at the door or can be mailed to Sybil Weigman, 2805 SW Tallgrass, Topeka,

Must RSVP by noon on Monday, Nov. 13 to Chelsey Smith at smithchel@yahoo.com or 785-213-5456.

BOARD BRIEFS-OCTOBER 10

By Edith Bronson, Secretary

Eight board members and one non-board member attended the noon October LWV Board meeting at O'Dooley's.

The Board learned that:

- Anita Epps is Voter Service Chair;
- Leaguers will register voters on three days in October;
- LWV will help with "Kids Count" at two polls;
- Judy Seitz has agreed to mail the VOTER;
- Chelsea Smith will chair the Nov. 16 Governmental Issues dinner;
- At October Tuesday Topics 32 members attended, 21 ate lunch;
- Nancy Perry will be the November Tuesday Topics speaker; and
- In December Pat Stinson will share "the real scoop on some of the First Ladies."

The Board requested that:

- Wrap-ups of VOICE meetings be written for the VOTER;
- Members send names of 50-year members to Nancy Whiffen or Sybil Weigman;
- At the Governmental Issues dinner, County Commissioners and City Council members be asked to express opinions about merging city and county departments;
- The price of Tuesday Topics luncheon be kept at \$8.25;
- A transfer of \$100 be made into the Tuesday Topics lunch fund; and
- Because of a conflict at the library, an alternate place for May Tuesday Topics be found.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

October 2006, Betsy Rohleder, Chair

What a super committee we have this year! All have been working since June and I am pleased to report, to date, that we have received commitments that allow the committee to announce that all open Board positions are now filled for the 2007-2009 term!

Now...we need YOUR help.

We have 3 officer positions that need to be filled – President, President Elect and Secretary. This is the chance for members to step forward and take a leadership position for YOUR league knowing that the Board is filled and ready to work! All that you have to do is "lead" them. In addition, the President will be able to appoint up to 6 more board members, if needed, to round out any jobs that need to be done.

In addition, our treasurer (with her able committee) has also agreed to serve an additional year.

Current Board Members who will serve until **April of 2008**: Chelsey Smith, Nancy Shaughnessy, Georgia Sandlin, and Sybil Wiegman (Treasurer)

Nominated Board Members (to be elected at the Annual meeting) who will serve until **April 2007- 2009**: Gwen Elliott, Pat Stinson, and Diana Siegal.

Thanks to ALL volunteers and we look forward to hearing from some of you that you are now ready to assist in the leadership of our group. All you need to do is call me or email me at 233.9262 or betsy@betsyrohleder.com

VOICE MEETING - September 28, 2006

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

Committee Members: Dottie and Bob Harder, Carol Jory, Judy Moler and Maryanna Quilty
Judy Moler 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 interviewed 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 reported MH/MI population runs 38- 70% Executive 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:

- ✓ Kansas NAMI paper gives the state an overall rating of "F" for Mental Health 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: Mental illness problems with returning vets and no treatment centers. Breakthrough House is working with Colmery O'Neill on this.
- ✓ Mentally ill people are falling through the cracks.

Actions: Before next VOICE meeting: Maryanna Quilty will interview staff person at Valeo; Judy Moler will interview Mark Hood and Vic Miller; and the Harders will interview Ted Ensley. Recommend for Tuesday Topics: Betsy Gillespie, Shawnee County Corrections; Director of Valeo and Glenn Yancey, Breakthrough House.

Next meeting: Library Café, Oct. 18, 11 a.m.

VOICE MEETING-October 19, 2006, Mental Health Care in Kansas

Gwen Elliott, Local Chair of State Study

Eleven League members attended the VOICE meeting on the State Mental Health Study at Sun's Restaurant on October 19, 2006. The group followed the State Study's Discussion Guidelines for Local Leagues. All five members of the local committee attended and participated. They are Kathie Prochaska, June Windscheffel, Carol Jory, Lois Scibetta. and Gwen Elliott. Carol Yoho has also contributed vast amounts of time and talent to the Study through her Web Master efforts. Thanks to Carol, much information is available at the LWV web site under "Mental Health Study."

Areas discussed at the VOICE meeting included populations and providers, accessibility and quality of services, complicating issues, and state policy and finance, with Dr. Scibetta

presenting a particularly thorough and comprehensible explanation of the current system. Although small in number, the discussion group was very knowledgeable, and it was extremely helpful to have members of the Study Committee on Mental Health in Shawnee County present. Data on the prevalence and treatment rates of serious mental illness in Kansas and the nation is included in a separate article in this month's Voter.*

The State Study Committee met on October 22, 2006, to write consensus questions, which will be available to local leagues by November 1, 2006. Answers to the consensus questions will be due back to the State Study Committee by February 1, 2006. Please watch for a VOICE meeting date in January to participate in this process.

***PREVALENCE AND TREATMENT RATES OF SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS IN KANSAS**

National Prevalence Rates

Briefly, from the National Institutes of Mental Health fact sheet "the numbers count" <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/numbers.cfm>, here are the national prevalence rates (in the US adult population) for:

Bipolar disorder: 2.6%

Schizophrenia: 1.1%

Major depression: 6.7%

These are the "big three," but schizophrenia is generally recognized to be the most disabling, followed by bipolar. For the most part, these two illnesses are chronic but treatable, requiring lifelong management.

Briefly, from the web site Association of Community Health Centers of Kansas, Inc.,

www.acmhcks.org:

Kansas Prevalence and Treatment Rates

In year 2000, Kansas had a population of 1,962,154 civilian adults. Of these, it is estimated that 105,956 (5.4%) plus or minus 33,356 had a serious mental illness. That's 3.7% to 7.0% of the adult civilian population of Kansas.

In Fiscal Year 2001, the CMHC's of Kansas served 12,838 individuals with serious mental illness.

This figure, though it is comparable to treatment rates in other states, means that only about 12% of SMI individuals received treatment in CMHC's.

The other 88% must have either received treatment through private providers, or they did not receive treatment at all.

Liz Smith

State Study Committee Member

OBSERVER REPORTS

NOTES ON THE TOPEKA CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS FROM 8/15/06 TO 10/3/06 by Joe Sargent

There were two major preoccupations that required the attention of the Council; they were the City's 2007 budget and the appointment of a new Chief of Police, a position that had been vacant since early 2006.

The 2007 budget includes no increases in the mill levy or administrative fees. In order to do this, the Council worked from 6:00 p.m., on August 22nd to 12:25 a.m. the next day. The final vote on the budget was five to four in favor. Council Member Blackburn offered many amendments to the proposed budget, all of which were rejected except for the elimination of the vacant position of City Parks and Recreation Director. The City employees received a two percent cost-of-living pay increase. As you can imagine, this budget is very complex.

As of September 19th, the City has a new Chief of Police. He is Ron Miller, the retired Chief of Police of Kansas City, Kansas. A panel chosen to interview and evaluate eight final candidates for Police Chief voted unanimously for Ron Miller, and City Manager Bonaparte accepted their recommendation. Expectations for changes in the Police Department are high as the new Chief of Police assumes his duties.

The sending of private e-mails by Council Members during the Public Meetings was brought up by Mayor Bunten in late August. The Council's attorney, Brenden Long, is in the process of checking into the legal issues concerning this matter.

On September 26, Ron Miller asked the Council to give the police the opportunity to research and report back on how best to handle Topeka's problem with prostitution. This issue came up after Council Member Kennedy raised the possibility of placing on television photos of persons arrested for soliciting prostitutes. Kennedy has a significant problem with prostitution in her district.

On October 3rd, the Council agreed to extend Shunga Trail by a half mile to the west from Southwest 28th Street and Fairlawn Road. The budget for this project will be \$564,700 with almost 75% of it coming from a Kansas Department of Transportation grant and the remainder from General Obligation Bonds.

On September 12th, the Council approved expenditures for a new animal health clinic at the Topeka Zoo. Its budgeted cost is \$587,500 with approximately 12% being contributed by the Friends of the Topeka Zoo and the rest coming from General Obligation Bonds and other available City funds.

On August 15th, Mayor Bunten presented to the Council three names for appointment to the Topeka/Shawnee County Riverfront Authority. The Council accepted all three: Doug Kinsinger, Mike Hayden, and Neil Dobler.

Since the passage of the budget, it has been remarkable that the Council's public sessions have been relatively brief. Not once have they approached their self-imposed deadline of 10:00 p.m.

OBSERVER REPORTS

SHAWNEE COUNTY COMMISSION-by Jan Waide:

September 21, 2006

The Commissioners acknowledged correspondence from Cox Communications regarding a pending increase in their fees. The Commissioners have no control over their fees but receive many complaints about them. They have researched the issue of whether or not Cox has a monopoly on TV services here. The federal government says there is no monopoly due to the availability of satellite receivers (dishes).

September 28, 2006

The Commissioners considered further financing for the Capitol Plaza Hotel, which recently sold. The county owns the land that the hotel sits on and therefore must agree to any financing that needs to be done.

Bill Singer, Director of Information Technology for the county, reported on tentative plans to consolidate communication services with the city. The savings to the county alone reportedly would be a million dollars per year. The contemplated savings to the city are unknown at this time.

October 12, 2006

There was discussion of the SE 29th and Croco Rd. intersection project. There will be no roundabout there as the county doesn't own enough right away to accommodate it. Most of the construction will be in 2007.

Betsy Gillespie explained the unfortunate incident in which a prisoner was released by mistake. All the right procedures and checks and balances were in place but staff did not follow them (human error). Four staff are being disciplined including some suspensions without pay. She said this was the first such error since July 2004.

October 19, 2006

Proposal to adopt a new County building code. This code can be seen on the Shawnee County web site. Approval/disapproval will be voted on at the November 22, 2006 meeting of the Commission.

As reported in the last Voter regarding the August 31, 2006 Commission meeting, the county did not follow its own rules and issue a conditional use permit for the Sheriff's firing range property. So a public hearing was held regarding a conditional use waiver. Six or seven people raised concerns about safety factors for their properties which neighbor the range. Thus, the Sheriffs' Department will go back to the Planning Committee on 11-13-06 to propose some additional safety measures. After the additional safety measures are accepted by the Planning Committee, it will come to the Commission for approval/disapproval.

VOTE! ELECTION DAY, NOV. 7



5 blank cards + envelopes for \$5

Contact Betsy Rohleder

Membership Application

I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League of Wmen 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

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

