



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

July 2007

3 NO TUESDAY TOPIC - ENJOY YOUR HOLIDAY!!!

10 LWVT/SC BOARD MEETING -- Francis O'Dooleys Bar and Grill, all members welcome 11:30 - 1:00

August 2007

7 Tuesday Topics -- Lunch 11:30 am, TOPEKA, SHAWNEE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Menu: Baked lemon-Pepper Chicken, Long-grain and Wild Rice, Broccoli/Cauliflower Medley, Salad, Rolls, Lemon Cake, and Beverages

Speaker will be **Gary Brunk, CEO, & President Kansas Action for Children.**

11 Back to School Fair - Voter Registration - More information to come.

14 LWVT/SC BOARD MEETING -- Topeka Shawnee County Public Library, Room 200, all members welcome 11:00 - 1:00

14 MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL EVENT - At the home of Jerry and Susan Farley, 3130 Shadow Lane - 4:30-6:30

PreZ SeZ



Georgia Sandlin
President LWVT/SC

June 8 to 11 I was in Washington D.C. Attending the LWV Council and my brain is on overload. The League always has an abundance of information and ideas so I will try to convey some in this VOTER and some in future VOTERS. Four main topics stand out in my mind. Membership was one. The membership of League has been in decline for the past 30 years. There has been a concerted effort to increase membership with 5 pilot Leagues. They have all reported success stories. They also report it took lots of work. The second topic was election reform and voting rights for Washington D.C. Longtime Leaguers have been hearing about DC voting rights for years. There continues to be a big push because 1) some think the end is in sight, and 2) anyone that does not have representation is a concern for the League. Immigration was the third topic that we heard about. I wish I could pick up the three people on the Monday morning panel and bring them to Topeka to speak to us. They had many years of experience and knowledge of this very complicated issue. The fourth issue will also sound familiar to long-term Leaguers. A discussion was held concerning the criteria we set for reaching

positions. Arguments ranged from one end of the spectrum to the other. One view was that two years is too long to be able to respond to legislation in a timely manner. The other side was concerned that the League would lose credibility if information was not deep enough to support a position.

Ray Suarez, senior correspondent of The News Hour with Jim Lehrer spoke at the banquet Sunday night. He spoke to the issue of immigration and of his book, The Holy Vote, the Politics of Faith in America.

Thank you to all Topeka-Shawnee County League members for making this trip possible for me. LWVUS Convention 2008 is in Portland, Oregon. I hope several representatives from our League will be able to go.

Georgia

ATTENTION MEMBERS!!

Each year the Board provides every member with a Yearbook. The Yearbook includes the listing of the board of directors, the membership directory, and the statement of positions. These booklets were distributed at the annual meeting. If you have not received yours, pick one up at a Tuesday Topics meeting.

ELECTION ISSUES REPORT FROM THE LWVUS COUNCIL, 2007

LWVSC---ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP EVENT TUESDAY AUG. 14TH 4:30-6:30

Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Delegate from the District of Columbia spoke to Council Sunday afternoon. She reminded us that citizens of DC pay more taxes federally than any other citizens. She urged us to let our legislators know that we are watching their vote on DC and Utah voting rights bill. Apparently, 11,000 missionaries from Utah are not allowed to keep their voting base in Utah while they are serving out of state.

LWVUS is emphasizing the following election administration issues:

1. The League is opposing ID and documentary proof-of-citizenship requirements.
2. The League supports improving administration of statewide voter registration databases/guarding against wrongful or incorrect purging.
3. The League is against unnecessary restrictions on voter registration.
4. The League supports improving worker recruitment, training and supervision.
5. The League is for improvement of polling place management and ballot design.

LWVUS opposes ID and documentary proof-of-citizenship because:

1. It disproportionately affects the elderly, young people, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and others.
2. There is no evidence that illegal voting by non-citizens is occurring in significant numbers.
3. Implementation of ID requirements can also cause problems for eligible voters.
4. Cost can be a significant barrier to obtaining photo ID.
5. It is easy to assume that all people have adequate proof of citizenship.

This is an annual event which is our opportunity to showcase the League to potential new members and to spend a little social time with one another. If you think about it, we would guess that everyone knows someone who they think might be interested in the mission of the League.

Younger than you, older than you.....someone who has mentored you or you have mentored..... this is the time to invite them to get to know your LWVSC. Our evening will include: social time, fun, overview of the League for potential new members and wine and cheese.

The event will be held at the home of Washburn President Jerry & Susan Farley 3130 Shadow Lane. Susan Farley has graciously agreed to host us and will be kicking off our membership event by joining the League.

We hope you will plan on attending and bringing a guest. Cost of the event will be \$10.00 per person and our guests will be at no charge.

If you have questions or are ready to RSVP please call Nancy 232-5931 or email shaughnessyassoc@cox.net. When responding we would also like to have the name of your quest.

Nancy Shaughhnessy, Membership Chair
Charlotte Adair, Betsy Rohleder, Sandi Wilber

Topeka/Shawnee County LWV BOARD BRIEFS 8 May 2007

At the **May Board Meeting**, the board learned:

- President Georgia Sandlin and President-Elect Gwen Elliott attended State League Convention in Wichita on 4/28 along with Betsy Rohleder. Gwen was elected as a director and Betsy was elected as Secretary of the State League.
- Topeka will host the State Council in April 2008.
- The State League Endowment Fund Bylaws were amended at Convention to make money more accessible.
- State Convention approved modified language for the proposed mental health position.
- Bob Harder and Gwen Elliott met with Kansas Secretary of Aging Kathy Greenlee, at the Secretary's request, to brief her on the League Mental Health Position as it relates to the elderly.
- Tina Delarosa would be the June Tuesday Topics speaker.



Topeka/Shawnee County LWV BOARD BRIEFS 15 June 2007

(June 15 Board Briefs continued)

At the **June Board Meeting**, the board learned:

- The garage sale produced \$491.07.
- President Sandlin attended the LWVUS Council in Washington, D.C. where there was a lot of information on immigration and she learned what other Leagues are doing to make money.
- The membership event will be August 14 at the home of Washburn President Jerry Farley and Susan Farley. Members will be charged \$10 and the League will cover the cost of guests.

- There will be NO Tuesday Topics in July, but there will be a board meeting.
- Jane Holt will form an *ad hoc* committee to explore additional methods of raising funds. Lois Scibetta will serve on the committee.
- Bob Harder has announced that the mock election that has been held at Scott Magnet School in the past will be held at Lowman Hill Elementary School this year. Bob is looking for volunteers to serve on September 11, September 25 and October 2.
- Gary Bruck will be the August 7 Tuesday Topics Speaker, presenting on the topic of Immigration. The meeting will be held at the YWCA.

INTERNET NEUTRALITY TASKFORCE REPORT COUNCIL 2007

During the Council meeting there was some discussion as to whether Taskforce work could be a substitute for a study. The League has two Taskforces working now. Internet neutrality is the subject of one.

At the 2006 National League of Women Voters Convention, the delegates voted to support government protection of Internet Neutrality in connection with the League's positions on Citizens' Right to Know/Right to Participate and Individual Liberties. This resolution was formally adopted by the LWVUS Board as a National League position to support Internet Neutrality. However, as the LWVUS explored how to implement this new position, it became clear that it would need the assistance of League experts to both define Internet Neutrality and provide supporting information to help League members achieve understanding and agreement on this complicated technical issue. Five members were appointed to the Taskforce in fall 2006. Sharon Ailslieger of Wichita, Kansas is one of the members. The Taskforce is expected to complete its work by June 30th, 2007, at which time the LWVUS will review and edit their work and submit materials to the membership for agreement and understanding.

Briefs from the County Commissioners Meetings

County Commission Meeting April 19, 2007

There was standing room only in the County Commission meeting room at 9:00. The Unfinished Business concerned the authorization of a conditional use permit to operate the outdoor shooting range. This range was located on property at SW 21st Street and SW Hodges Road. Apparently this property has been used as a shooting range for about 15 years. The property is owned by the county. When the sheriff's department applied for a building permit to construct a larger building the plan went before the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission voted to not approve the plan. The Commissioners had asked for more information regarding the safety of such a facility in its location. Sheriff Barta contracted for three consultants to look at the location and report with their recommendations. The NRA did not report. A company out of Virginia recommended the property have an indoor range. A third consultant, a Mr. O'Neal, who consults and visits 5-10 ranges a week reported extensively at the meeting. Mr. O'Neal reported that the property was suitable for a range with certain modifications. Three patrons from the neighborhood also testified in opposition to the permit. Most concerns addressed the safety and noise associated with live ammunition use around private homes. The question required three votes. Commissioner Buhler voted no. Sheriff Barta is charged with finding another property for a shooting range. Discussion ended at 10:20.

County Commission Meeting May 3, 2007

Three pieces of business dominated the interest of the commissioners. The first concerned the number of people served, or not served, by trash haulers. The conundrum for people in the Shawnee County Health Department and Refuse Department is how to track the numbers whether by customers or by refuse containers. The answers the Commissioners were seeking were not available at the meeting. Those responsible were told to get the numbers on paper and return to the Commissioners with a report. Bill Singer next reported to the Commissioners regarding the staffing problems

at the County Emergency Communications Center. The center calls for 51 personnel but he only has 33 in positions now. Mr. Singer stated several reasons for lack of manpower. One was lack of qualified applicants. Many apply but approximately one out of seven is hired for training. Another was the difficulty of the training. Trainees are evaluated everyday and not retained if they are not keeping up. The training took 9 months so there was always a lag between the hiring the having a worker for the department. Mr. Singer has reduced the time for training to 5 ½ months using a different system of training hoping to have reliable dispatchers. Mr. Singer reported that other governing bodies were having the same staffing problems for emergency dispatchers. No action was taken.

The third discussion centered on speeding vehicles on SE Bennett Drive. Tom Black of public works reported on the research done with machines that note speeds and what we know about how people will drive regardless of posted speed limits. The commissioners noted that when work on Croco Rd is complete the number of vehicles on SE Bennett Drive will be reduced. No action was taken.

County Commission Meeting May 17, 2007

This County Commission meeting was the first since the results of the heavy rains of May 6 and 7 could be assessed. Commissioner Buhler requested a review of the emergency procedures. Bill Singer reported that communication between the smaller cities and law enforcement broke down because cell phones didn't always work. The county ran out of barricades, buses and boats. Transportation was commandeered to complete rescues. Although a comprehensive training on emergency procedures was given to personnel several years ago there has been enough turnover in staff. He said the staff receives practice but it does not include EOC. The communication issue will be addressed immediately as 4 radios will be purchased for each of the smaller cities in the county: Auburn, Silver Lake, Willard, and Rossville. A Task Force will be formed for a top down review of emergency procedures. Commissioner Ensley will recommend a list of people to be chosen for the task force.

County Commission Meeting

May 21, 2007

The May 21st meeting opened with our County Treasurer and League member Larry Wilson presenting a check to the County Commission. Under new business Cynthia Beck, County Clerk, requested \$5000 for employees in her department to attend an educational conference in San Diego. It was approved by a vote of 2 to 1, Commissioner Miller voting no.

Commissioner Mill moved a public hearing be placed on the agenda regarding North Pointe Ridge Storm Sewer District. The motion passed.

As a result of a previous motion Commissioner Ensley proposed a list of people to serve on a task force to evaluate and make recommendations regarding emergency responses with county resources. Commissioner Buhler suggested other persons and also suggested the task force have a report by June 29. Her motion died for want of a second. Commissioner Miller reported that he thought the proposed committee was too large and should include some people outside the emergency response team.

County Commission Meeting

May 31, 2007

The Sunflower Soccer Association was at the meeting seeking an appeal of the Shawnee County Health Agency's opposition to a septic system. The Commission seemed more inclined to contribute to the cost of connecting lines to the city sewer than a septic system. Final action was postponed.

A number of residents of the North Pointe Ridge storm sewer district were at the Public Hearing protesting the apparent continued increase of fees for the property owners in said district. Testimony revealed the incompetence of the engineer hired (and fired) by the county resulted in the current problems with water run off. Commissioner Miller moved the county take the burden of full payment from the property owners.

The other agenda item that may qualify for "What's the rest of the story?" category was a request by Rich Davis to advertise, recruit and hire for a Safety Coordinator position. Commissioner Miller asked some questions about salary then moved that the position be moved to the County Counselor's office. His motions passed with no other discussion. According to the job description, "this position develops and implements safety programs and coordinates Workers Compensation

claims for all County departments."

County Commission Meeting

June 7, 2007

This meeting lasted only 15 minutes. Gary Middleton, emergency management director, retired after 30 years with Shawnee County. Later in the meeting the commissioners separated the emergency management department from the emergency communications department. Each department will report to the County Commission instead of management reporting to the emergency communications department. According to the Capital-Journal the departments were combined in 1999.

County Commission Meeting

June 14, 2007

Commissioner Vic Miller was concerned with the wording of the agreement for financing of the master plan for development for the Topeka riverfront. Commissioner Miller was assured that the wording would be changed. Nevertheless, by a vote of 2-1, with Commissioner Miller dissenting, the Commission approved supporting the financing of a plan for the Topeka riverfront.

Request for renewal of the 2007 tax exemption (of \$474,000) for Blue Cross/Blue Shield carried with no discussion.

County Treasurer Larry Wilson appeared before the Commission for approval of the contract with Commerce Bank and Trust for two years of banking services. Although Commissioners expressed satisfaction with the services provided by Commerce Bank, the commissioners voted to extend the contract on a month to month basis while they examined the options from other banks.

H.R. Cook, General Manager of the Expocentre, requested money for a chiller to replace one that is "freezing up." Apparently, both the McQuay (company) and the county insurance company deny having warranty coverage for a frozen chiller. The Commissioners voted to order another chiller from McQuay but to pursue litigation if some money is not recovered from the defective chiller.