



VOTER

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April 17, 2009

CALENDAR

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MAY 2009

5 Tuesday Topics - Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, 11:30

Speaker - Dr Terry Sandlin Interim Superintendent of Topeka Public Schools School Consolidations

MENU: The menu has not been determined at this time.

12 LWVT/SC Board Meeting – Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, upstairs meeting room, all members welcome, 11:30-1:00.

JUNE 2009

2 Tuesday Topics – Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, 11:30

The Land Institute's Climate and Energy Project
 With Nancy Jackson
 MENU: Unknown

6 League Garage Sale— 3469 SE Crestwater Drive — detail elsewhere in Voter

9 LWVT/SC Board Meeting – Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, upstairs meeting room, all members welcome, 11:30-1:00

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

Prez Sez

wish to view. As your new president, I really appreciate the immense talent of our members and their willingness to share it.

By the time this Voter arrives, we will have reached consensus on our national study, the National Popular Vote. The national League has published a DVD on this subject, which several board members have received. It is available for anyone who is interested to view. Please let us know if you wish to borrow it.

At least three of our members are planning to attend the State League Convention on the topic of "Winds of Change" in Great Bend on May 2nd. We hope to have news to share with the membership when we return.

The Board is still in need of one more appointed member. We are fortunate to have a strong board and a fun team with whom to work. Please let me know if you are interested in serving in this capacity or if you want to suggest a friend for me to contact.

Looking ahead, the Board agreed to have a garage sale at my house on Saturday, June 6th from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please look for a map inside this Voter and think about items you may have to contribute. We will be needing people to price items the day before the sale and also to work on June 6th. Sign-up sheets will follow.

Enjoy this beautiful time of year and have a happy spring!
Gwen

Gwen Elliott
President LWVT/SC

Thanks so much to all who attended and participated in our Annual Meeting on April 7th. The event proved we can put on quite a program all by ourselves! Carol Yoho has put a delightful collection of pictures from that meeting on our web site, which members may

May Tuesday Topic Program

Dr. Terry Sandlin and School Consolidations

With "Realities and Absurdities in School Consolidation" Dr. Terry Sandlin, Interim Superintendent of Topeka Public Schools will set groundwork for our local League study adopted at this year's Annual Meeting. Dr. Sandlin has agreed to speak to the LWVTSC's May 5 gathering at the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library at 11:30AM-1:00PM, helping establish our study of the costs of both administration and public education in each of our local school districts. Dr. Sandlin has served Topeka Public Schools for more than 30 years as a science teacher and administrator. He currently serves as Associate Superintendent of Learning and Instruction for the 501 School District. Be ready for some reality testing!

June Tuesday Topic Program

The Land Institute's Climate and Energy Project with Nancy Jackson

The Climate and Energy Project of Salina's Land Institute promotes the rapid and cost-effective deployment of energy efficiency and renewable energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase energy security and build a resilient energy economy in Kansas. Spokesperson Nancy Jackson holds an MA in environmental history from the University of Kansas and sits on numerous environmental boards addressing global warming and the development of renewable resources in Kansas. The Tuesday Topic for June 2 from 11:30-1PM at the **YWCA** downtown Topeka will provide you with inspiration and further your education on current Kansas energy issues.

Board Briefs by Mary Kopp, secretary

April 14, 2009 – 11 board members were present. Treasurer, Sybil Weigman's report was approved after explanation that the \$2,500 cost for the Candidates Forum couldn't be delayed until this year.

Pat Stinson recommended that we consider placing an ad in the newspaper to encourage new members.

Motion was carried to speak in support of consolidation of city and county Parks and Rec. Georgia Sandlin will go to county commission meeting, Joe Sargent has agreed to be our representative at the city council meeting.

Marge Ahrens reported on upcoming Tuesday Topics speakers. It was noted that Don and Judy Moler have previously come in April; there was discussion of when they might come.

President Gwen Elliott suggested that we have a League garage sale June 6th, and volunteered to have it at her house near Lake Shawnee. See map and more information in this Voter.

The board meets the second Tuesday of the month at noon. Meetings will be upstairs at the library through September. An additional board member is still needed.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE TOPEKA CITY COUNCIL FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH, 2009 PLUS THE APRIL ELECTION OF 2009

BY JOE SARGENT

On April 3rd Topeka held citywide elections. Two issues placed on the ballot by the city council passed. Thus, the city's sales tax will increase by a 0.5% from 7.45 cents to 7.95 cents for ten years. It can only be used for maintenance and improvements of existing streets, gutters, curbs, sidewalks, alleys, and street lighting. The second issue concerned the legal ability of the council to vote on a possible override of a mayoral veto.

Bunten was re-elected to a second term as mayor by a wide margin and council members Ortiz [3rd district] and Harmon [9th district] won their bid for a second term. In the 5th district Larry Wolgast beat Bill Haynes running for re-election. Karin Hiller took the first district seat vacated by Kennedy while the seventh

district position held previously by Blackburn ended in a very narrow victory margin for Robert Archer over Lisa Stubbs.

The city council will need to consider issues hanging over from the former council. High on the list will be the consideration of raising the mill levy for the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority which faces a \$1.9 million budget shortfall. As far as I know, city manager Boneparte's evaluation has not been completed. Consolidation of the Topeka and Shawnee County park and recreation departments is back on the agenda. Further, Police Chief Miller is proposing a partnership with the county to purchase and operate a helicopter. Morale among city employees is a problem according to a survey taken in March 2008.

In February, the possibility or refinancing the city bonds to obtain a lower interest rate was raised since interest rates for home mortgages were low.

City finance director, Jim Langford, explained that the interest rate at that time for the city's bonds was 4.47%. This was lower than the 4.8% that the city would get if it refinanced.

Zaire Thomas signed papers on March 6th giving ownership of Sumner School to the Los Angeles-based True Foundation World Outreach Ministries, Inc. Their proposed plan is to turn the school into a multipurpose resource center.

NOTES ON COUNTY COMMISSION MEETINGS

BY GEORGIA SANDLIN

February 19, 2009

The LWVTSC is familiar with the Crisis Intervention Team because Dennis Bosley presented at Tuesday Topics last year. He was at the commission meeting this morning regarding a grant proposal with Valeo. Dick Kline, of Corrections, reported that 40 people were diverted from jail since August 1. The goal is to train more law enforcement and corrections officers.

John Knight was before the commission with many requests to award or solicit bids. Commissioner Buhler had some doubts but he got the OK for his requests.

Randy Speaker, deputy city manager, appeared before the commission to explain the land bank. The city of Topeka would like to establish a land bank to deal with properties that are not used productively and, sometimes, a detriment to the area. The legislature must give permission to establish a land bank. The city would like to partner with the county on a land bank project. No action at this time.

February 23, 2009

There are some roads in the county that do not receive regular maintenance and the county commission gives notice and declares that status. That was part of the

business this morning at the commission meeting.

The Parks and Recreation department is proposing more contracts for umpires and rowing events, as well as, completions of the Lake Shawnee Trail Project. That trail is funded by 30% county money and 70% Federal grants.

As the recycling business has hit hard times more material is coming to the county. Steve Bolton, of recycling department, was before the commission asking for more containers.

February 26, 2009

Today was Norma Grubb Day at the Shawnee County Commission Meeting. Mrs. Grubb, of Dover, brought one of her award-winning coconut cream pies. The pie was presented to Shelly Buhler, winner of the drawing, and rightly so.

When the commission got down to more serious business we learned that Tom Vlach, of public works, would like to get started on a design for the Willard Bridge. He emphasized that this is long range project and the design is phase one. Other business was fairly routine, filling positions and contracts for services.

After a 20 minutes executive session, Commissioner Miller announced that the county would pursue collection of the remaining amount of tax money the county was shorted by the state of Kansas due to computer error. Only 3 years of taxes owed the county was awarded. It's worth a try.

March 2, 2009

The residents of Valencia Road and the truck drivers from Kansas Sand filled many chairs at the county commission meeting this morning. Some of them brought a script and some talked off the cuff. The subject was a resolution changing a conditional use permit for the road. Kansas Sand wants to run more routes per day and deliver to more than one place. The planning commission did not recommend increasing the number of trips but Commissioners Miller and Ensley did not follow that recommendation. They voted to approve both requests by Kansas Sand while Commissioner Buhler dissented.

The rest of the business of the day was routine in comparison.

Commission continued on page 6

Commission continued from page 5

March 5, 2009

This meeting clicked along with 3-0 votes on contracts and purchases until the last item on the agenda. The last item was the request from Heartland Visioning for funding. Bill Moore was before the commission to make the request and faced an unhappy Vic Miller. Commissioner Miller reported that he had requested information on the amount of public money that goes to Heartland Visioning. The request was made by email and phone. Mr. Moore was, at first, reluctant to give that information, as some money from a public entity might be foundation money. After some sparring, the commissioners received the information they requested and Heartland Visioning received their funds with a 2-1 vote, Commissioner Miller voting no.

March 9, 2009

The meeting started with the retirement ceremony for Lt. Martha Lutz with the Sheriff's Office. She was the first woman at the sheriff's office to be promoted to the rank of lieutenant. Some of us can identify with her when she said she is real happy that she won't have to wear those big ugly shoes every day.

John Knight, Parks and Recreation, and John Kabus, Weed Department, were before the commission for permission to award bids to take care of the grass and weeds.

The discussion of long range plans for the recycling department of the county took up most of the time. Steve Bolton has been director of the recycling and the waste departments. Ap-

parently, some of the recycling companies that serve the county have gone out of business so the county has more material to handle. Bolton reported that the county needs to increase the number of employees to meet the demand. There is some question as to whether the department would continue to be self supporting since prices for recycling material have decreased. There were comments from representatives of Keep America Beautiful, Waste Management, as well as private citizens. The commissioners passed this problem to the county's solid waste management committee, although there was some question as to whether the committee had met recently. I guess they will meet now. The LWVTSC's positions encourage recycling.

March 12, 2009

Commissioner Buhler was absent this morning so contracts, requests and resolutions were approved 2-0. One full page of the agenda, 15 items, consisted of the consent agenda. Anne Freeze, health agency, was seeking approval for several items and contracts including "time sensitive" funding. This "time sensitive" federal stimulus money is appearing already to expand health care. Anne reported that other stimulus money will come later for IT and capital improvements.

March 16, 2009

Three items on the agenda may continue to spark interest in the county. The first concerns the plan to update the siren system. RFQ's (Request for Quotations) are being made to determine what prices are

available for systems that need to be purchased. It was approved 3-0.

The second request was presented by the Shawnee County District Attorney for approval of a special council from outside the county. Upcoming charges of a police officer raise some questions of conflict of interest if local counsel prosecutes. It was approved 3-0.

The third request was from Tom Vlach of public works. Mr. Vlach requested a date for public meetings and public hearing. It seems some residents of the Lake Sherwood area find it hard to believe that a pipe system located under the lake won't cause some harm. This request was approved 3-0.

I think we will hear more about each of these requests.

March 23, 2009

The word *roundabout* has taken on the emotional energy of hand gun, cigarettes and coal-fired. My guess is, that is why Tom Vlach came with pictures, traffic data, videos, and engineers to present a plan for two roundabouts on NW 46th located just as traffic comes off of highway 75 from another roundabout. The presentation, which included comments from two business owners in the area, took some time. Included in the mix was the federal stimulus money that will help pay for the plan. The commissioners gave their OK to pursue the project.

Steve Bolton, Refuse, John Knight, Parks and Recreation, and Anne Freeze, Health

Commission continued on page 6

Agency also had requests that were approved 3-0.

March 30, 2009

Today's meeting went more than 2 ½ hours. Three items on the agenda attracted citizens of Shawnee County and attorneys representing said residents.

First, the Sheriff's Office found a more acceptable location for a firing range. The last proposal brought some complaints from citizens about safety and noise issues. This time there were no citizen objections and the commissioners approved the resolution 3-0.

The second resolution for a clothing free outdoor recreational facility was deferred until the health agency could make a determination on the necessity of sewer and water requirements.

The third resolution proposed an asphalt plant where only a quarry is currently operating on SE 45th St.

Residents living on 45th street were present at the meeting to protest the anticipated increase in truck traffic. A final decision was deferred until the next meeting when the commissioners would have more information.

April 2, 2009

This morning the commission approved contracts and a resolution for the appraiser, health agency and technology but the most time was spent on permission for the operation of an asphalt plant and concrete ready-mix plant on SE 45th.

Residents on SE 45th St. object to the truck traffic but in order to conduct business trucks need the shortest route to a job. Commissioner Ensley wants no truck traffic from the plant for safety reasons. Commissioners Buhler and Miller approved the resolution with an amendment that represented a compromise. The amendment states that no asphalt or concrete trucks will be allowed in 45th Street unless the county commission makes an exception on a case-by-case basis. Neither side was happy.

April 6, 2009

There were happy faces in the meeting room as the commissioners presented checks to government entities in Shawnee County. Shawnee County was one of the Kansas counties shorted some tax revenue because of a computer error. We can be thankful to have county commissioners that set to work immediately to collect this money from the state. Shawnee County's legislative delegation was present to assist in the presentation of checks as they also helped in getting the money reimbursed to the county. Commissioner Miller announced that the county would continue in its pursuit of money owed for the six years that it was not reimbursed. It is worth a try.

April 13, 2009

The sheriff's office was granted the request to purchase two Body Bunker Ballistic Shields and one First Choice Armor M.U.S.T. ballistic shield. As this observer was trying to imagine what this equipment would look like only a few items of business completed the

meeting. Commissioner Miller announced before adjournment that he, Mr Eckert (county counselor) and Mr. Knight (parks and recreation) were working on a plan for consolidation of the Parks and Recreation departments of the city and county. Hopefully, the first draft would be completed by the next county commission meeting. City council members would be invited to the meeting for discussion.

April 16, 2009

Robert Archer, Larry Wolgast, Sylvia Ortiz, Jack Woelfel (of the city council), Mayor Bunton, Norton Bonaparte (city manager), Terry Bertels(city parks and recreation), Jackie Williams (city attorney), and David Bevens (city spokesman) were in attendance at this commission meeting. Commissioner Miller very carefully outlined the parks and recreation consolidation plan drawn up by the committee consisting of John Knight (county parks and recreation), Rick Eckert (county counselor), and Commissioner Miller. He repeated that this plan was work in progress and they were open to negotiation. He emphasized that the commission was as invested in the city of Topeka as they were in the county. commission meeting the county and He announced that after the city people were invited to discussion and questions on the proposed consolidation. They would like the consolidation to begin January 1, 2010. All three commissioners spoke in support of the consolidation. The whole meeting and presentation seemed a very positive step in the process.

Results of VOICE meeting on National Popular Vote By Gwen Elliott

On April 16th, eight of our League's members met at the Classic Bean to consider the consensus questions on the national League's National Popular Vote Study. To greatly complicate the study, John Koza, member of the League, self-described originator of the NPV plan for direct election of the President, and lead author of the book, EVERY VOTE EQUAL: A State-Based Plan for Electing the President by National Popular Vote, had mailed out a 21-minute DVD to those League members across the country whose names and addresses he could obtain. The VOICE meeting began by listening to his DVD. After a detailed review of the plan for NPV and its background, Mr. Koza delivers a very negative critique of the National League's study questions, going so far as to say that they violate the proposal which the National League

adopted in selecting the study of the NPV in 2008. It is the first time in the memory of our League members that a critique of the study questions has been offered by an official source BEFORE the consensus could be taken nation-wide. However, even in this case, the consensus process is well under way, and many Leagues across the country have already answered the consensus questions. Given the information from Mr. Koza, along with the doubts of several of our own members about the wisdom of the inter-state compact plan for the NPV, our League did not answer the seven study questions and was unable to come to a consensus, except to agree that we do not support the continuation of the electoral college and, in general, agree to the principle of "one person, one vote." It will be fascinating to see how the National League will handle the study results, which at this point, are very much in question. Stay tuned!

President's Report for April, 2009

Our Annual Meeting, "Memories of the League," on April 7, 2009 seemed very successful, especially since we had 37 members and 2 guests in attendance. Thanks to Georto all gia, to all who spoke, and who helped with that meeting. Carol Yoho has arranged some pictures of the event on our web site. You may want to check them out.

We still need one more appointed director on the Board. Please bring any suggestions regarding persons who might be willing to serve.

We had the consensus meeting on the national Popular Vote on April 16th at the Classic Bean. Several of us have received a DVD on that subject. We watched it on a lap top before we took consensus.

The State League is encouraging attendance at the State Convention on May 2 in

Great Bend. It is not too late to register. Several members will be traveling and staying together, so no one will need to drive alone.

We decided to have what has become our annual garage sale. It will be held at my house on June 6. Everyone needs to bring their sale items to my house on June 5 and be prepared to help us place a sale price on the item.

Please bring any notebooks or portfolios to the board meeting so we can determine what may need updating.

Thanks! Gwen

Crisis Intervention Training

Topeka's third, 40 hour Crisis Intervention Team training ended, Fri-

day afternoon, April 17, at the Topeka Police Department. Thirty seven students attended—four crisis case workers from Valeo, TPD animal control, code compliance, VIP's patrol officers, Shawnee County Sheriff's Office had five. Shawnee County Jail had ten, Capitol Police had a couple, KDOC had a few from several locations. The big news is that we had Judge Frank Yeoman and Assistant District Attorney Amy Bipes make a presentation that will have to go into overtime, about an extra half-hour, the next time. And that the officers at the Juvenile Justice Facility, where we visited, are hugely interested in taking the training, themselves. The tone of the training was very positive.

Not to get ahead of ourselves too much, our next training will be July 20-24. The main recruiting focus, for that training will be on School Resource Officers throughout Shawnee County. And officers from the other agencies will be encouraged to attend, as well.

So far, we have trained 90 students in the three CIT trainings, in Shawnee County. Lt. Bill Cochran, of the TPD, has plans to train dispatchers to better identify crisis calls and get the calls routed more quickly to CIT officers, when possible. We figure that when we reach the threshold of 25% of all patrol officers trained, our CIT program will begin to mature even more.

Once we determine that the Mobil Crisis Unit collaboration with the TPD and SNSO is in a sustainable situation, we will then begin to explore the possibility of establishing a mental health court, in tandem with the Wichita CIT program's effort to establish a mental health court, there.

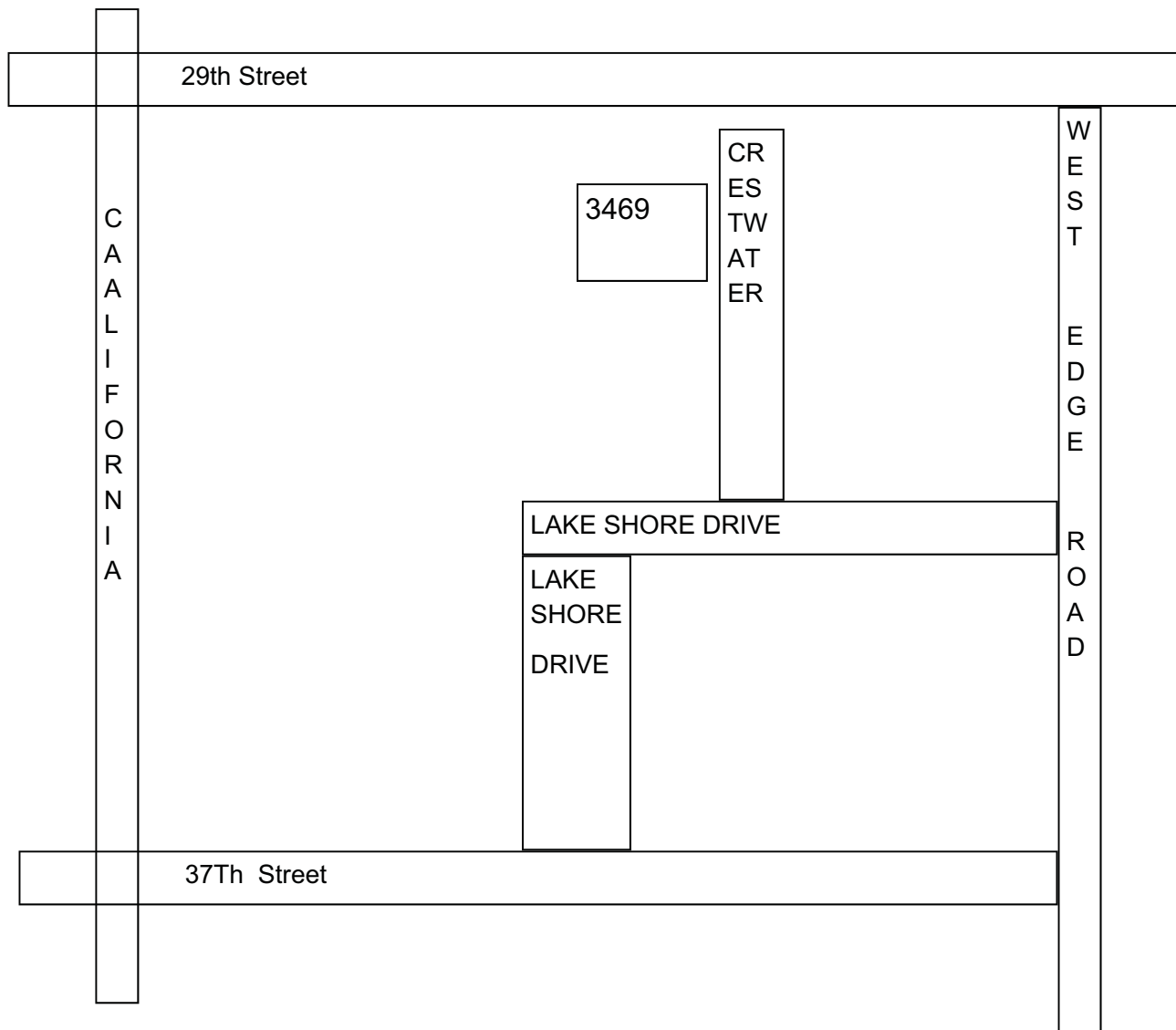
GARAGE SALE

The garage sale will commence at 8:00 am on Saturday June 6, 2009.

Bring the items you have to sell to Gwen's house on Friday June 5, 2009.

The directions to Gwen's house are as follows. Starting at 29th and California, go east on 29th to the west edge of Lake Shawnee. Turn right on West Edge road. Go South on West Edge to Lake Shore Drive. Turn right (WEST) on Lake Shore Drive until you come to the second street on your right, Crestwater. Turn right onto Crestwater. Go approximately 2 blocks to 3469 Crestwater. It is on your left. The home has a mansard roof.

MAP TO GARAGE SALE



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOPEKA-SHAWNEE COUNTY OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS 2009-2011

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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

_____ \$53 for a 1 year Individual Membership.

_____ \$75 for a 1 year Household Membership.

_____ \$85 for a 1 year Sustaining Membership.

_____ \$25 for a 1 year Student (age 18) Membership.

_____ I am unable to join the League at this time, but enclosed is a tax-deductible
Contribution in the amount of \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Please make check payable to league of Women Voters Topeka Shawnee County and

Send to Sybil Wiegand, Treasurer, 2805 SW Tall Grass DR., Topeka, KS 66614-6206.

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