



VOTER

October 19, 2009

CALENDAR

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November 2009

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

**Speaker - Govern-
mental Issues, luncheon
with legislators**

**MENU: Chicken Salad
Cruciants with pasta salad,
assorted cakes.**

**10 LWVT/SC Board Meet-
ing - Topeka and
Shawnee County Public
Library, upstairs meeting
room, all members welcome,
11:30-1:00**

**8 Lowman Hill School Voter
Registration, 8:45 am**

11 Veterans Day

**18 Naturalization Ceremony,
Voter Registration, Topeka
High Auditorium, 2:00 pm**

26 Thanksgiving

December 2009

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

**Speaker— Dale Den-
nis, Deputy Commissioner
of Education**

**MENU: Beef Stew,
rolls and butter, assorted
cakes**

**8 LWVT/SC Board
Meeting - Topeka and
Shawnee County Pub-
lic Library, upstairs
meeting room, all mem-
bers welcome, 11:30-1:00**

11 VOTER DEADLINE
send articles to
lois5510@hotmail.com or
Lois Cox 910 SE 43rd
Street, 66609

12 Hanukkah

25 Christmas—Happy

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



Gwen Elliott
President LWVT/SC

We are well into our busy month of October with League Day on October 17th launching Safeguarding U.S. Democracy: Quest for a More Diverse Judiciary, a statewide League campaign focusing on the importance of diversity in ensuring fair and impartial Kansas courts. League members have mailed 100 invitations for League Day and for the reception the night before at the Monroe School to judges,

Justices, Washburn Law school faculty members, and community leaders. We have also submitted a grant proposal to LWVUS for funding for related projects and events that we have planned for the next year.

The first VOICE meeting on our local study, Fact Finding in K-12 Education in Shawnee County School Districts, will be held on October 22nd from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the Classic Bean meeting room. Georgia Sandlin is heading up this very interesting study. The second VOICE meeting for it will be held at the same location on November 19th.

Don't miss the Membership Event on October 27th at 7:00 p.m. at the Washburn Law School when Dr. Paula Doress-Worters will discuss her new book on early women's rights leader, Ernestine Rose. All members and prospective members are urged to attend. Watch for our ad in the Topeka Capital-Journal!

Members of the Shawnee County Legislative Delegation will be our guests

and speakers at Tuesday Topics on November 3rd at the Public Library. This event replaces our customary governmental issues dinner, and we hope it will be well attended. The media will be invited.

The Finance Drive committee, headed by Teresa Stambaugh, is putting the finishing touches on its letter. League members as well as businesses will be receiving copies of it soon.

We were greatly saddened in September to accept the resignation of our board Action Chair and great speaker, Pat Stinson, due to health problems, and we hope she will be able to attend some League events in the near future. We are very grateful to Liz Post for accepting a board appointment and for taking on many of Pat's duties.

As always, please remember to check our website, LWVTSC, for news and calendars, which Carol Yoho keeps updated. We hope you will join us for the exciting and important fall events our League is offering.

VALUE OF ONE NEW MEMBER

The value of a new member is a friendship. It is having new members helping to educate the public of the importance of voting. Helping naturalized citizens register to vote.

**HELP US OBTAIN ANOTHER MEMBER BY ASKING
SOMEONE TO A MEETING**

Tuesday Topics: November 3

Members of the Shawnee County Legislative Delegation will be our guests and speakers at Tuesday Topics on November 3rd at the Public Library. This event replaces our customary governmental issues dinner, and we hope it will be well attended. The media will be invited.

Tuesday Topics: December 1

Dale Dennis, Deputy Commissioner of Education

To strengthen our study of local school finance, we are honored to bring Dale Dennis, Deputy of Commissioner of Education, Kansas State Department of Education to our December 1 Tuesday Topics. Mr. Dennis has served as Interim Commissioner of Education for the Kansas State Department of Education on four occasions since 1995. He supervises \$3.4 billion state and federal funds flowing through public and private schools in our state. In addition, he serves as Liaison for the State Board of Education to the Legislature and Governor.

Mr. Dennis is highly regarded by educators, policymakers and the courts for his knowledge of school finance. Don't miss this opportunity to widen your understanding of our longstanding topic of interest and action. Lunch will be served in Marvin Auditorium at the Topeka/Shawnee County Public Library at 11:30AM followed by Mr. Dennis's presentation from 12:00PM to 1:00PM.

Voter registration

By Anita Epps

Voter registration has continued every other month at naturalization proceedings. The last three were held in May and July at the Frank Carlson Federal Court House and in September at Topeka High School. The proceedings were held in the T.H.S. auditorium at the request of the presiding judge, Honorable Janice Miller Karlin, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge. She had made the request to change the normal site for the ceremony to give high school students the opportunity to witness the proceedings. Teachers who concluded the ceremony would enhance their students' learning signed up to have their classes attend. The Topeka High School Marine Corp ROTC program and The Madrigals also participated directly in the program. At the September event, there were seventy-six people from thirty-eight countries who became American citizens. At these past three registration opportunities, fifty-two new citizens completed voter registration forms with many more taking forms to be completed later. Thanks again to those league members who have helped with voter registration.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE TOPEKA CITY COUNCIL BY JOE SARGENT

Proceedings of the Topeka City Council in August, September, and early October

Budget night on August 18th lasted a total of one hundred minutes while in the previous six years it ran past midnight. In July the city manager proposed a \$224.5 million budget for 2010 which would have increased the city's property tax by 1.85 mills. By amending the 2010 budget the council decreased the property tax increase to only 0.114 mill. This was accomplished by elimination of the police helicopter program as well as its mechanic. That decision did not please the police chief and the political action committee representing the Topeka Fraternal Order of Police Lodge No.3. Police Chief Miller stated that the 2010 budget had put him in a bind but stated that he could live with it..

During that same evening the council allowed the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority [TMTA] to raise its property tax for one year by 1.4mills over its present level of 3mills. This was less than the 1.85 mills that the TMTA had asked for. In late September the TMTA board looked at three ways to reduce services so that it could remain within its given budget. The option chosen by the board modified the fixed bus structure and ended evening service two hours earlier from 11:30P.M to 9:30PM. TMTA will hold several public hearings before finalizing their budget.

On September 2nd the city manager announced that Allen Bradshaw, a member of the Topeka Fire Department for the past 29 years, was the new fire chief. Kent Dederick, president of the local unit of the International Association of Fire Fighters, started that its members seemed pleased with the appointment. The new fire chief on September 22nd was granted an exception to a city rule that required his salary to be frozen if he did not live within the city limits. He presently lives in Shawnee County.

On September 29th the council approved by a six to three vote an ordinance banning smoking in public indoor places as well as places of employment. Exceptions were retail tobacco stores, outdoor places of employment, private residences except when used as a child care, adult day care or health facility, and no more than 20 percent of hotel or motel rooms that are available for guests. Before the ordinance can take effect, there is a sixty day waiting period after its publication in the Topeka Metro News. This allows affected businesses to prepare their establishments for implementation of this ordinance. Public testimony was considerable in connection with the ordinance with those being for it more numerous but opponents are now in the process of preparing a petition and a written ordinance against the smoking ban. If the petition is legally valid, the council has twenty days to pass the accompanying ordinance or allow the voters to vote on it within ninety days..

The city recently received \$1.6 million as a refund from the state because of a miscalculation, starting in 1999, in the fuel tax revenue that is shared with local governments. Approximately half of the refund will be used to replace aging equipment used in street maintenance. The remainder will go for street projects. Another \$600,000 grant from the federal government will improve the synchronization of traffic lights along specified portions of 21st Street, Wanamaker, and Topeka Boulevard. On October 1st the half cent sales tax increase to be used for existing streets went into effect.

Former Governor Mike Hayden , now heading the Topeka-Shawnee County River-front Authority, on October 6th asked the city to transfer thirty parcels of river-front land owned by the city to the river-front authority. The land would then be leased out for sand and gravel dredging which will provide money to hire a professional staff to promote the river-front project.

We have a new (or returning)
member:

Pamela Johnson-Betts
3737 SE Howard
Topeka, Kansas 66605
Phone 295-3018

Email:
pjohnso@topeka.k12.ks.us

NOTES ON COUNTY COMMISSION MEETINGS

BY GEORGIA SANDLIN

August 13, 2009

At the beginning of the commission meeting sometimes there were presentations and announcements that do not get the acknowledgements by the general public that they deserve. This morning Hallmark cards was recognized for thousands of hours of volunteer service done by its employees for the Shawnee County Recreation Department. Also the Architects of the Lake Shawnee County trail were recognized by the National Association of County Parks and Recreation Officials for its outstanding trail design.

The new firing range for the sheriff's department received the go ahead from the commissioners. Funding for design and construction will come from forfeiture money. A public hearing regarding assessments for streets and sewers was opened, closed and approved with no comments from the public. Also you may rest easy that the North Topeka, Oakland creek levees are PALS (Provisionally Approved Levies), as the contract was signed.

August 17, 2009

No citizens were at the commission meeting to comment on a resolution providing for an additional 2 years on a conditional use permit for work on quarried material on NW Elmont Road. That makes the

decision easy, the commissioners voted 3-0 for the permit.

Another request wasn't so easy. Tom Vlach, public works, requested that the bidding process be waived for a school zone signal by Farley School. The "bidding process waived" is a red flag for the commissioners. The fact that the school district was late in the request was not a good enough reason. There was no motion to waive the formal bidding.

Although discussion of the budget was on the agenda it was deferred to allow Commissioners Miller and Ensley to attend a funeral. A number of people from agencies that aren't usually represented at commission meetings will be returning Thursday for the dreaded budget decisions.

August 24, 2009

The regular business of the commissioners such as the purchase of road oil, permission to attend out of town conferences and contracts with other government entities was dispensed with few comments. Then the elephant in the room, THE BUDGET, was addressed. After the last meeting, which this observer missed, the commissioners had whittled the projected increase to 1.2 mills. The next two cuts only received a 2-1 vote. The motion to cut from the maintenance budget lacked Commissioner Miller's vote and the motion to cut from the sheriff's budget lacked Commis-

sioner Ensley's vote. In the end the 2010 county budget will have a 0.8 mill levy increase. Because of the anguish involved Commissioner Miller reminded everyone 1.) that state revenues are down, 2) we are thankful that county employees were understanding on what they contracted for, and 3) "Our goal should be to cut out unnecessary spending, not to achieve a zero mill levy increase."

September 10, 2009

The commissioners approved 10 contracts and requests this morning and deferred one. Anne Freeze of the Health Agency presented contracts for approval that would contribute to our good health. Health agency contracts are often with other agencies and by grants, as was true today.

Something we don't see everyday was an equipment seller who made a mistake on a bid that was accepted by the county. He asked to be released from the bid but the best the county could do was have him reimburse the difference between his and the next highest bid, if that bid was still valid.

The deferred business concerned damage the county refuse department had done to a rock wall. All bids for the repair work were not available so the commissioners would not vote on this issue today.

(Commission continued on page 6)

Commission continued from page 5

September 14, 2009

Anne Freeze requested and received approval of contracts with KDHE for funding and delivery of WIC services for Shawnee, Osage, and Wabaunsee Counties.

KDHE was mentioned again at the meeting when the former Shawnee County landfill came up on the agenda. It appears the county has neglected the monitoring required of an old landfill. The analysis required by KDHE will cost \$54,714 after \$7,179 was already spent on the first evaluation of the landfill.

September 17, 2009

There was some confusion as to how five checks to Lindemuth, Inc. were lost and then found. The treasurer's office said they did not reach Lindemuth, the auditor's office said they had already been cashed. The mood of the commissioner's was not enhanced when it was revealed that Lindemuth owned the property the treasurer's office has leased at White Lakes. Any action was deferred 3-0.

The next item of interest was the Sherwood sewage system. Sometimes it doesn't matter what the engineers say if people want their sewer line to go around the lake causing more mess and costing more money, that is what they will get. Some people won't drive through the Holland Tunnel either.

September 21, 2009

We witnessed Round 2 under 'Unfinished Business' on the agenda this morning. Commissioners, with Commissioner Miller acting as point guard, continued to question Shawnee County Treasurer, Larry Wilson about the system for checking on lost checks written by the county. The person that "called the bank" was absent so all questions were not answered and the issue was deferred once more. The commissioners also requested the county counselor investigate the possibility of including a 30 day cancellation clause in the lease on offices at White Lakes.

The consent agenda followed with 17 items allowing plenty of time for the public hearing declaring certain roads as minimum maintenance roads. In the county we have roads designated for maintenance, minimum maintenance, right of way, and, perhaps, cow path. Apparently, the designation of your road determines the service the township will give your road. Citizens have an opportunity to comment on the action taken by the county but we didn't hear any today.

October 5, 2009

This morning's meeting started with the unfinished business regarding the unreconciled bank statements in the Treasurer's office. Shawnee County Treasurer Larry Wilson, Marti Leisinger, audit finance, and the auditor from Berberich, Trahan & Co. PA all reported to the commission as to the progress being made to bring the county finances up to date. A major concern is the lack of an outside audit, which had to be delayed because funds had not been recon-

ciled monthly in 2008. An outside audit must be in place to receive grant money and the health agency stands to lose several important grants. It appears that employees of the Treasurer's office were not sufficiently skilled in the new computer system to handle the change in systems in the necessary time.

The commissioners did approve a contract with KDHE that would provide funding to respond to the H1N1 virus.

The parks and recreation department also was granted a request and approval of contract for projects at Lake Shawnee.

October 8, 2009

Staff from The Topeka Youth Project appeared before the commissioners asking for an exemption from a requirement by the county for an audit from agencies receiving social service funding. Currently only agencies for the elderly receive the exemption. Apparently, one grant the Topeka Youth Project receives through the city is for \$5,000 and an outside audit would cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000. After some questions and ruminations about the problem Commissioner Enley moved the exemption be granted. The motion passed 2-1. Commissioner Buhler voted nay. She explained that she didn't want to set a precedent.

Officers and Board Members
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TOPEKA-SHAWNEE COUNTY
2009-2011

OFFICERS:	email/best contact phone	term
Gwen Elliott, President 3469 SE Crestwater Dr. Topeka, KS 66605	thekti@aol.com 785-267-4037 H 785-235-7512 W	2009-2011
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Lea Billinger, Secretary 7515 Blue Inn Pl Topeka, KS 66614	lbillinger@cox.net 785-478-9046	2009-2011
Sybil Wiegman, Treasurer 2805 SW Tall Grass Drive Topeka, KS 66614	1500sybil@cox.net 785-478-1679	2008-2010
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Marge Ahrens, Tuesday Toopics 1238 SW Mulvane Topeka, KS 66604	MRCPASW@gmail.com 785-232-1947	2009-2011
Anita Epps, Voter Service 1825 S W Webster Topeka, KS 66604	repps@cox.net 785-232-4851	2008-2010
Maryanna Quilty, PR, Meeting 1105 S W Qakley Topeka, KS 66604	mquilty@cox.net 785-234-6925	2008-2010
Nancy Shaughnessy, Membership 1266 S W Collins Topeka, KS 666 4	shaughnessyassoc@cox.net 785-232-5931	2009-2011
Teresa Stambaugh, Finance Drive Chair 4608 SE Oak Bend Dr Berrington, KS 66409	itstambaugh@cox.net 785-862-6621	2009-2011
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Patty Pressman 4115 SW Eagle Point Rd. Topeka, KS 66610	idapress@cox.net 782-478-8636	2009-2010
Susan Stover 3457 SW Birchwood Drive Topeka, KS 66614	sstover@kwo.state.ks.us 785-273-0074	2009-2010

(Officers and Board Members continued)

APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

Georgia Sandlin 2706 SW Indian Trail Topeka, KS 66614	gsandlin@cox.net 785-272-6076	2009-2010
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LIZ Post, Action Chair 3537 SW Summerwood Road Topeka, KS 66614	ksmeadowlark@cox.net 785-273-8700	2009-2010
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Lois Cox 910 SE 43rd St Topeka, KS 66609	lois5510@hotmail.com 785-267-5458	2009-2010
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OFF BOARD SUPPORT:

Carol Yoho 3013 SW Quail Creek Dr. Topeka, KS 66614	cyoho@cox.net website 785-273-3089
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Lois Decker 537 NW 62nd St. Topeka, KS 66617	785-246-1985	telephone outreach
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YOU ARE INVITED

To “CAST YOUR VOTE—TRANSFORM THE WORLD”

A Social Action Retreat, Friday, November 6, 2009, 5:00 PM

View an inspirational and historical account of women who risked their lives for woman’s right to vote and helped shape America.

The opportunity is yours to have an extraordinary conversation with:

Elizabeth Ensley, Shawnee County Election commissioner

Gwen Elliott, UMW District Secretary and current President League of Women Voters

Nancy Daniels, Executive Director Big Brothers-Big Sisters:

Nancy Boyda, former U.S. Congresswoman, currently serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense in Reserve Affairs for Manpower and personnel, Washington, D.C.

Sack Supper \$5/00, Child care and child’s meal provided free with reservation

Countryside UMC, 3221 S W Burlingame Road, Topeka, KS

Pick up registration form today.

Questions?? Call Pastor Caren Loper 785-266-7541

Or Kathy Smith 785-478-9163

STATEWIDE 'DIVERSE JUDICIARY' CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF WITH PUBLIC FORUM

League of Women Voters Launch Project To Ensure Fair and Impartial Kansas Courts

The League of Women Voters of Topeka Shawnee County announces the launch of **Safeguarding U.S. Democracy: Quest for a More Diverse Judiciary**, a two-year, statewide campaign focusing on the importance of diversity in ensuring fair and impartial Kansas courts.

In conjunction with a diverse coalition of partners, Leagues across Kansas will develop and implement strategies for education and advocacy, such as community forums, town hall meetings, events at local law schools, and meetings with appointed and elected officials.

The project kicks off with a public forum on Saturday, October 17, in Topeka, featuring the Honorable Rebecca Love Kourlis, Executive Director of the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System. Together with the League of Women Voters of Kansas and eight local Leagues across the state, they will tackle the question: "Does the Kansas Judiciary reflect the diversity of our state? If not, why not?"

According to the 2008 report from The Brennan Center, *Improving Judicial Diversity*, most judiciaries do not reflect the diversity in their states—and Kansas is no exception.

"As of June 2009, 46 out of 265 judges in the state of Kansas were women, and women represented only 16 out of 166 judges at the District Court level," said National League President Mary G. Wilson. "Additionally, there are four African-American, four Latino, one Asian, and no Native-American judges out of 265 throughout the state. We can do better."

"Communities that lack a diverse judiciary risk a crisis of confidence among their citizens," Wilson continued. "Lack of diversity creates a perception that the courts may not be as fair or impartial as they could be, and leads citizens to question the role the courts play in their lives."

"The League of Women Voters believes that diversity in our courts is crucial, not only because different viewpoints make for a more robust jurisprudence," said [Your League's president], "but because it will help to legitimize our justice system in the eyes of an ever-diversifying public."

"The League of Women Voters has worked to promote a fair and impartial judiciary for more than eight years," Wilson concluded. "We are excited to begin a new phase of this project in Kansas, and help America fulfill its promise to provide equal justice for all."

For more information, go to www.lwvk.org and www.lwv.org/fairandimpartialcourts.

Kansas League Day

Does the Kansas Judiciary Reflect the Diversity of Our State? If Not, Why Not?

A Public Forum

Saturday, October 17, 2009 * 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library

1515 SW 10th Avenue, Topeka, Kansas

Lunch provided. RSVP to dianekuhn@kc.rr.com by October 8, 2009.

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
LOIS COX, VOTER EDITOR
910 SE 43RD STREET
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66609-1620**

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.

(785) 478-1679