



VOTER

October 16, 2010

CALENDAR

President:

Gwen Elliott
3469 SE Crestwater Dr.
(66605)
(785-267-4037)

Membership:

Nancy Shaughnessy
1266 SW Collins (66606)
785-232-5931

VOTER Editor:

Lois Cox
910 SE 43rd Street (66609)
785-267-5458

Inside this issue

Board Briefs	3
City Council	4
County Commission	5to8
Curbside Recycling	10
December Tuesday Topics	3
Fall Kansas League Day	13
New Member Event	12
Prez Sez	2
Things to think about	8, 11,
Treasurers Vote Question	11
Westar's Green Team	9

November 2010

2 General Election—Vote today

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

Speaker— County Commissioners & City Council members to speak 2 to 3 minutes and then answer questions

MENU: Quiche, tossed salad, rolls, butter, cookies and iced tea.

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

18 Voice Meeting for the City -County Finance local study.

The location will be announced later.

25 Happy Thanksgiving

December 2010

7 Tuesday Topics, Westminster Presbyterian Church (elevator entrance on the East) The address is 1275 SW Boswell., 11:30

Speaker— Rebecca Woodman and Donna Schneweis, speak on Kansas Death Penalty

MENU: sandwiches from Schlotzsky's and ice tea

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

17 VOTER DEADLINE 5pm— send articles to lois5510@hotmail.com or Lois Cox 910 SE 43rd Street, 66609

Happy Holidays

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

Prez Sez

What a month this has been for our League! At last count, the number of new members from Nancy Shaughnessy's extremely successful event on September 23rd was five, and the amount of income from the auction that Betsy Rohleder chaired was surpassing \$1,500. Many members both donated and purchased many valuable items, and I can now choose from at least five Marge Heeney outfits in my own closet. Our cash flow problems are also resolved for the time being. Many thanks to all concerned!

Meanwhile, Liz Post is bringing

us interesting speakers at VOICE meetings on the City/County Finance local study. The Molers presented a tremendously informative overview of the tax situation in the county at a recent planning meeting, and we may have another controversial topic----the question on the November ballot regarding the Shawnee County Treasurer----(see the question, itself, printed elsewhere in this Voter) presented at the VOICE meeting on October 21st at 5:30 p.m. in one of the upstairs meeting the rooms of the library.

Maryanna Quilty has been busy scheduling candidate forum times with the staff members of KTWU. We were all disappointed when the candidates for governor accepted invitations to a forum in Wichita, but turned ours down. Our League did co-sponsor a forum for the candidates for Secretary of State, which was taped on October 9th. It will be shown on KTWU at 9:00 p.m. on October 20th. The recording of the forum for the candidates for Congress was held on October 15th, and will be aired on October 19th at 9:00 p.m.

State League Day, on October 30th from 9:30 to 2:00 at the

Public Library, will also feature a debate between the candidates for Secretary of State. Those planning to attend, and we hope many members will, should send checks of \$20, which will include lunch payment, to the State LWV office at 618 Kansas Ave, Topeka, 66603.

As usual, Marge found an excellent speaker in Peter Hancock, Director of Public Relations for the Kansas Health Policy Authority, for our October Tuesday Topics. He explained the new national health care legislation in detail. Our next Tuesday Topics, on election day, November 2nd, will be our governmental issues lunch with members of the City Council and the County Commission as our speakers.

Finally, it is great to have Pat Burton back among us and able to notify the membership of action alerts and events. What an exciting time it is to be a member of the LWV! As always, please make sure to check our web site, LWVTSC, for the latest on our calendar and League news. Enjoy these beautiful days of autumn! Gwen

Tuesday Topics: December 7

The League of Women Voters of Kansas opposes sentencing policies with death penalty provisions. Two speakers will address the Tuesday Topics December 7th meeting on the subject of the death penalty. Rebecca Woodman is a capital appellate attorney in Topeka who argued the constitutionality of Kansas' death penalty statute before the U.S. Supreme Court. She teaches classes on the death penalty and wrongful convictions at Washburn University's School of Law.

Donna Schneweis is the current Coordinator for the Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty and the Kansas State Death Penalty Coordinator for Amnesty International. Her activism with the death penalty began in the 1980's and has included work with Wili Otey who was executed in Nebraska in 1994. She is the recipient of an Amnesty International Ginetta Sagan award for human rights.

If you need to come later, you are welcome to eat while the speakers talk from 12-1.

Board Briefs

By Lea Billinger

October 12, 2010 LWV Board meeting at the library— 12 board members and 2 guests were present.

Marilyn Nichols and Stephanie Mulholland visited to inform us of November ballot question about consolidation of city and county financial offices, and electing vs appointing to that office.

Planning for upcoming VOICE meetings, October 21 and November 18 – Liz Post is chair of the local study on City/ County Finances. Look for more in the VOTER.

The Membership Event/ Auction netted over \$1,500.

KTWU invited the Topeka Shawnee County League of Women Voters to sponsor candidate forums for the governor's race, as well as Secretary of State, 2nd Congressional District and Attorney General's races. A forum between Secretary of State candidates Kris Kobach and Chris Biggs was already taped, it will air October 20. Another between Lynn Jenkins and Cheryl Hudspeth, candidates in the 2nd Congressional District race, will be taped the 15th and will air the 19th. Maryanna Quilty is the LWV contact.

The outcome of the survey on Tuesday Topics lunches is that for most of the year, we will continue lunches as before, but in summer when attendance is lower there will probably be no organized lunch provided.

Anita Epps registered 12 voters after Tuesday Topics. She will continue to hold Voter Registration sessions after Tuesday Topics and after board meetings.

Next board meeting will be November 9 at noon, TSCPL.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE TOPEKA CITY COUNCIL FROM MID APRIL 2010 TO END OF MAY 2010

BY JOE SARGENT

Reflections On the Proceedings of the Topeka City Council

This article covers the period in 2010 from early August to early October.

Budget night (August 17th) lasted only four hours. The governing body which includes the nine council members and mayor needed to close a \$278,000 shortfall in order to balance the budget. Councilman Woelfel made a motion to shift 0.2 mill out of the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority's property tax levy to the city's property tax levy cutting the shortfall to \$78,000. Boneparte was instructed to find \$78,000 in the city's operations to close this gap.

At the start of budget night Boneparte's budget of \$226.5 million lacked \$850,000 from being balanced. In addition to the above adjustments, budgeted salary increases for 215 city employees (not covered under collective bargaining agreements) were cut from 3% to 1.5% and various social agencies had their funding decreased by 25% from their 2010 funding levels. Other fine tuning measures to create a balanced budget were also passed.

The Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority (TMTA) had its 2011 property tax levy capped at 3.2 mills. Councilman Harmon in late September proposed that the city look into the possibility of discontinuing its present method of

having the governing body setting TMTA's mill levy. The Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority and the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library have the authority to set their own mill levies. The city does not have any authority over TMTA's daily operations but it does appoint members to serve on TMTA's board of directors.

Potholes continue to make headlines. The decision by the county commissions to keep \$2.1 million provided annually to the city through the state motor fuel tax would leave the city without money intended to pay for repairing potholes and other street maintenance. Commissioner Vic Miller maintained that the city could use funds from the city's sales tax programmed for major street improvements for street maintenance. A movement headed by Bob Storey and Joan Wagnon plan to gather enough signatures on a petition to put this matter to a vote county-wide. Silverlake, Auburn, Rossville, and Willard will receive money from the state motor fuel tax.

The governing body seemingly has passed a groundbreaking ordinance regarding animal control. No longer will breed-specific rules remain in place but will be replaced by rules confining only dogs that have shown inappropriate aggressive behavior. Feral cats can now roam free but will need to be vaccinated and spayed or neutered and have obtained a slit in the left ear for identification. Stray cats will no longer be euthanized. Other cities have expressed interest in this ordinance.

On September 14th after testimony by advocates from Kansas Rights 4 Kids, the council passed a resolution supporting the strengthening Kansas state laws dealing with registered sex offenders.

After the council on September 21st passed an ordinance allowing possession and consumption of alcohol in city buildings and facilities on specific approved occasions, Mayor Buntin issued a veto which essentially killed the ordinance since a supermajority of the council (six of the council members) would be needed to override the veto.

There have been no buyers for the College Hill twenty-five townhouses. The council was approached with a proposal for their sale to a company specializing in providing lower income individuals with affordable housing through a federal grant. Rentals for the retail space are still in negotiation.

Workshops looking at the revitalization of Downtown are underway and plans for upgrading I-70 corridor through Topeka are

“We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives here.”

Charles Kettering

NOTES ON COUNTY COMMISSION MEETINGS

BY GEORGIA SANDLIN

August 16, 2010

There was a somber atmosphere at the county commission meeting. Perhaps because many attending had come from the funeral of a county worker and also because the big ugly budget had to be dealt with.

Dave Sterbenz, emergency management, brought people from the US Geological Service and the National Weather Service to explain the need for a stream gauge on the Wakarusa River. This gauge is able to send reports (to the internet and cell phones) of rising waters from an area that is hard to reach by people. Commissioners Buhler and Ensley approved the request with Commissioner Miller dissenting. John Kennedy of Parks and Recreation reported on the needs of the West Lawn Memorial Gardens. Mr. Kennedy had a list of needed repairs that included straightening the tombstones, cleaning the pond, road maintenance, etc. The commissioners approved preliminary work although there is some question as to what the total cost of improvements will be as well as expected income. The long-term goal is to hand the cemetery over to a private vendor.

Commissioner Buhler announced that she would return the proposed budget to department heads and elected officials for one more trimming. She reported that more cuts were needed and she preferred that those running

the departments had the opportunity to make those cuts. After that happy note, Tom Vlach, public works, reported on the progress of the two big road projects in the county – NW 45th Street and SW Wannamaker and 63rd.

August 19, 2010

League members are well aware that not all issues facing elected officials present a clear yes or no choice. This morning's county commission meeting demonstrated the conundrums elected officials have to face. The first was the settlement with former DA Robert Hecht. The county counselor's office negotiated a \$100,000 payment from Mr. Hecht although the commissioners felt Mr. Hecht owed the citizens more. Commissioner Buhler voted nay.

The next item that presented a big price tag but little choice was the "cleaning" of the former Shawnee County landfill. Ks Department of Health and Environment requires that the area meet certain standards. The sheriff's department used the land as a firing range so lead has been added to the mix. Mr. Bolton of the refuse department was instructed to see if the sheriff's department can contribute funds to help with the cleanup. The county counselor's office has yet to review the contracts with the company that is to do the assessment and cleaning of the site.

When it was time for discussion of the 2011 budget Com-

missioner Miller moved for a recess for over 40 minutes so the commissioners could study new information given by Stacey Woolington, finance department. When they returned Commissioner Buhler proceeded to move that department budgets be reduced, usually to the same amount as 2010. Most of the motions passed 3-0. This observer had to leave before the process was complete for this day. The Capitol-Journal reported that over 30 reductions were made and that decisions voted on were not final.

August 23, 2010

The Shawnee County Commissioners were faced with the daunting task of reducing budgets and finding new revenue because their stated goal was to avoid an increase in the county's property tax levy. Unfortunately, they did not agree on the means to reach that goal and time was running out. During this morning's session Commissioner Buhler repeated her opposition to Commissioner Miller's proposal to keep about \$1.7 million that the City of Topeka has planned on to repair the streets. It was apparent to this observer that the commissioners were not working together on the budget when motions would die for lack of a second and silence would ensue when Commissioner Buhler asked for motions. The meeting recessed until 1:00 and this observer left for a commitment in Kansas City. The Capitol-

Journal reported that the session went almost six hours and Commissioner Buhler finally reluctantly voted as Commissioner Miller proposed

August 26, 2010

This morning's meeting lasted about 15 minutes. The major business was to allocate fuel tax money to the smaller cities in the county. Commissioner Miller sponsored a resolution that allowed gas tax money to go to Auburn, Rossville, Silver Lake and Willard. This resolution was necessary since the commission had opted out of the state law that required that 50% of the gas tax money be shared with all the cities in Shawnee County and the county governments plan was to keep only Topeka's share.

August 30, 2010

Barry Beagle of the planning department had the most to report to the commission this Monday morning. Approval was given for a final plat of Greco Lake Subdivision at NW 994th St and NW Wilson Road. A report was accepted and a permit was approved for a sand dredging operation at NW 17th St. and NW Landon Rd. An amendment for zoning for a auto salvage operation at 5913 SW Topeka Blvd. was approved. Various criteria must be met for projects to be approved by the planning commission. There was some time spent

with questions about the aesthetics associated with the salvage yard: fences, berms, plantings, etc. All of these agenda items were recommended for approval by the planning commission and received a 3-0 approval by the commission.

Tom Vlach of public works reported that the intersection on NW 46th near Highway 75 is open to traffic. It should be noted that this project was funded by stimulus money, was finished ahead of schedule and for less money than anticipated.

September 2, 2010

The public works department has been keeping an eye on the Willard Bridge for sometime and requested the commission's approval to have a replacement design ready for when money becomes available. Tom Vlach, head of Shawnee County Public Works Department, would like citizens to know that the state legislature will be the most likely source for most of the funds (\$21,000,000) and that the legislators need to hear from citizens regarding this very unique bridge.

John Kennedy of the parks department came before the commission requesting permission to start the search for a manager for West Lawn Memorial Gardens. Mr. Kennedy has been charged with the job of getting the cemetery in good

enough condition to hand it over to private management.

September 13, 2010

Anne Freeze requested out-of-state travel for an employee to attend an institute in Oklahoma City. Most of the expenses are to be paid by other agencies with the county footing the bill for perhaps \$300 for meals. She won approval by two of the commissioners, Commissioner Miller dissenting.

Commissioner Miller also dissented when the subject of "FullCourt" software came before the commission. This expense was not included in the court's budget. Stacey Woolington, financial administrator, reported that the money would come from the reserve fund, be paid for over three years, with 0% financing.

All three commissioners approved soliciting bids for internet marketing services for the Parks and Recreation. This service is expected to save the county money by reducing the need for brochures and postage. By recommendation of an independent auditor the county has established a three-person audit committee. The committee, consisting of the financial administrator, county counselor, and human resources director, will deal with complaints and concerns of auditing accounting issues.

September 20, 2010

Whenever this observer sees Bob Perry, Bond Counsel,

on the agenda she knows that business may as well be in Greek. The commissioners passed that resolution with no questions.

Anne Freeze of the health agency had the most items on the agenda but all passed. The request for out-of-state travel was reimbursed by KDHE. The requests to ask for bids and to apply for a grant require no funds at this time. The other item was the renewal of a contract that helps track patients with chronic illnesses.

Rich Eckert, county counselor, asked to hire a office administrator. He reported that the position would be reclassified and salary would be less, all in the interest of saving the county money. Tom Vlach appeared again to report to the commission regarding consequences for not changing street signs as required by the federal government. Mr. Vlach reported that he was told the county may be subject to loss of federal funding or liability if an accident occurred without the new signs posted.

When Commissioner Miller learned the source of this information was not an attorney he took issue with the term "liability". Commissioner Miller indicated he will pursue the issue. No action was taken.

September 23, 2010

Rich Davis, facilities management, received permission to find the best price for the county's natural gas supplier and for night security. Steve Bolton, waste and recycle, received permission to solicit bids for a hazardous waste contractor. Tom Vlach, public works, received permission to accept a bid for de-icing salt. After the commissioners

voted 3-0 for these purchases and potential purchases we learned from the Treasurer's idle funds investment quarterly report that investments are substantially down.

September 27, 2010

H.R. Cook brought a list of expenditures (\$11,589) needed to keep the Expocentre running smoothly. The commissioners approved these expenditures 3-0. Next on the agenda was authorization to cancel and reissue checks by the County Treasurer and that was deferred because it was unclear why the action was needed. Tom Vlach, public works, reported that a bridge over Snake Creek was found to be deteriorating faster than expected. Commissioners approved Mr. Vlach's request to waive the usual bidding process and enter into a contract with a company with prior knowledge of the bridge.

The sheriff's department reported purchases for the range and training complex. There was no approval needed but only acknowledgment of the receipt because no tax dollars were used. The purchase was covered by the forfeiture fund.

Before and after the commission meeting my granddaughter, Quinn Goodall, and I handed out homemade chocolate chip cookies to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the League of Women Voters. Yum, yum.

September 30, 2010

Eula Snyder received a plaque and many good wishes from the com-

missioners and co workers this morning. She is retiring after 21 years of working for Shawnee County. It was apparent that she was appreciated and one felt a special sense of community from her co-workers.

Carol Ramirez, health agency, was before the commission for approval of contracts with labs and for Medicare requirements. She also faced some questions from Commissioner Miller about reports regarding social workers and physicians and their case loads at the agency. She reported that the concerns were being addressed.

The construction is complete but the business of traffic management is not according to the commissioners. Commissioners Buhler and Miller received emails from citizens regarding the speed limits at NW 45th and Hwy. 75. It was previously 40 mph. It was posted at 30 mph because of the construction. A speed study showed 85% of the people traveling at 35 so Mr. Vlach proposed that it be set at 35. The commissioners asked that the current 30 mph signs be removed and conduct another speed study. And so it is.

At the end of the meeting Commissioner Miller "wondered" if payroll should be handled by the county clerk's office or human resources. The retiring Eula Snyder has been the payroll officer in the county clerk's office. Audit /finance and IT departments were asked to do re-

search as to what would work better.

October 4, 2010

It is time to begin phase two of the study of the Highway 24 corridor. The commissioners voted 3-0 to enter into a contract with KDOT and the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization (MTPO). There were complaints from business owners along US-24 regarding the first study which included input from an out-of-state consulting firm. This second phase will be conducted and funded by KDOT.

Barry Beagle, Planning, did not receive a unanimous vote for his request for professional imaging services. Mr. Beagle would like to have all records, some going back 50 years, in digital form. Commissioner Miller argued that the county workers could do the necessary imaging in their "spare" time. Commissioners Buhler and Ensley approved Mr. Beagle's request to seek proposals for this project.

Tom Vlach, public works, appeared before the commission with a resolution regarding a loan for the Sherwood waste water upgrade. The residents of Sherwood would repay the costs of this project through their sewer bills. No cost to the county brings a 3-0 approval.

Jamie Hancock, Shawnee County Extension Council, appeared before the commission for help publicizing the need to vote for a Master Gardening project paid for by Pepsi. Under "Administrative Communications" Commissioner Miller questioned a memorandum sent

out by the treasurer's office to guarantee checks.

October 7, 2010

Two issues on the agenda dominated this meeting. The first was in the first reading of a resolution changing the building fees. Dawn Wright, representing the Topeka Home Builders Association, requested the commissioners require building codes if higher fees are charged. A builder also spoke to the commissioners with the same request but Commissioner Miller replied that when county residents had the opportunity to vote on the issue 90% voted against having building codes.

The second issue that took some time at this meeting concerned the memo sent to department heads from the treasurer's office. Apparently, instructions included several steps to be taken when a check's written amount and box amount differ. The commissioners argued that UCC, Uniform Commercial Code, stipulates that the written amount is the official amount and adding more writing to the check would cause confusion. It appeared to this observer that Treasurer Wilson wouldn't change his instructions.

October 11, 2010

The building fees appeared once again for the second reading and the vote. Dawn Wright of the Topeka Home Builders Association spoke to the commission again voicing objections to higher fees with out more services (building codes). A builder also spoke to the issue stating that lenders now want inspections and if codes are not required a warranty inspection is required which

may cost \$1,000. The commissioners passed the resolution 3-0 stating this would raise more revenue for the county.

Some time was spent discussing the closing of a road in Rossville Township. A member of the township board asked several questions to clarify responsibility for the property if the road was closed. She appeared satisfied to learn the township would have no responsibility.

Commissioners quickly approved the purchase of two HP servers for the sheriff's office and Department of Corrections and they approved the soliciting of bids for construction to "clean up" an area adjacent to the Expocentre.

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself."

Leo Tolstoy

"Efficiency is doing the thing right, Effectiveness is doing the right thing."

Peter F. Drucker

Westar's Green Team Volunteers for Environmental Project

By Grace L. Wilson

Mike Nolan of the Green Team from Westar Energy came with Jessica Collins to speak at July Tuesday Topics about the environmental projects they have been doing for the past 20 years. A volunteer group of 30 to 35 employees plans environmental projects all over Kansas. From 250 to 600 employees and extended family members put in a lot of weekends and sometimes weeknights to carry out the projects.

The Green Team of Westar partners with schools, scouts and environmental groups. Their goals include habitat improvement, environmental education, recycling, and conservation. They have planted more than 40,000 trees and cut down trees where needed to preserve prairie lands. The Green Team has created wetlands, encouraged native grasses, built homes for nesting birds, and cleaned up streams.

The team mills lumber for their projects by recycling old utility poles. They also use recycled metal from steel towers. Nolan showed photos and described some of the projects they have completed:

Welda Prairie Tree Clearing and fence removal in Garnett. Like this project, the Green Team

has done a lot of projects on Nature Conservancy land.

Cassody Tree Clearing.
Quivera Boy Scout Dock near Sedan.

Milford Nature Center Flight Pens where rescued wounded birds can practice flying before being released into the wild.

Flight pens for operation rescue in **Eudora**, two at the **Topeka Zoo** and one west of **Wichita**.

Baker Wetlands near Lawrence where they built an 875-foot boardwalk with benches and a pavilion. For every acre of property taken for the bypass highway, they have to give 3 acres to the Baker Wetlands.

Outdoor classrooms for Perry and Lecompton **elementary schools. The roofs are made of lengths of lumber spaced so that some light filters in.**

Cheyenne Bottoms Lookout Tower from which you can see at least 7 miles.

Kansas State Forestry Shade Building in Manhattan. The spraying a water and fertilizer had rotted the wood. The outdoor building was torn down in October and had to be ready in January. The Green Team worked through the snow. The replaced the building with 50/50 shade netting and treated wood posts.

Camp Qu-Tu seating area at Lake Perry. Nolan said they receive a call about once a month from Boy Scouts about an Eagle

Scout project and the Green Team helps them.

DeVictor Park in northwest Lawrence where they worked with college students on stepping stones to cross a waterway.

Tuttle Creek wetlands restoration. Required borrowing heavy equipment for digging.

Lewis and Clark Pavilion near White Cloud.

Pergola off K-10 Bypass.

Manhattan Suspension Bridge made of steel which connects two trails.

The Green Team also has done tree planting at schools. Two adults might divide a class in half to show the students how to plant a tree. Nolan said they once planted more than 40 trees at Eisenhower Middle School in Topeka. The Green Team volunteers were kept busy as all the groups wanted help at the same time to be sure their tree survived.

The Green Team has also done clean-up work on the Shunga Trail. They also provide kits for building bird boxes.

Some time might be given by supervisors at Westar for environmental projects, but most of the projects are done on a Friday and Saturday, with at least all of Saturday's hours being volunteered.

Addressing concerns about energy consumption and the environment, a year ago Westar started using methane gas from the area's Waste Management Landfill which is burned to propel

Curbside recycling could extend the life of the landfill

By Grace L. Wilson

Steve Bolton, director of refuse and recycling for Shawnee County, spoke to the League of Women Voters of Topeka/Shawnee County at their September Tuesday Topics meeting about his proposal to have curbside recycling in Shawnee County.

“Ten years ago the drop-off boxes for recycling were wonderful,” Bolton said, “but today we’ve out-grown it.” The drop-off boxes are not cost effective, and the recycling department is going broke. Bolton has experience trying to make a tight budget balance, having brought the department back from bankruptcy since he started there. Last month, recycling made money for the first time since 2008.

The only funding for the recycling department is from two sources: \$1.50 per ton of trash deposited in the county landfill of which the state receives \$1 (this has not gone up for 20 years) and the sale of commodities (recycled materials). Tires, metal, and other recyclables were bringing in funds and then took a nose dive. The department’s costs are also impacted by the price of fuel.

“We started looking at ways we could change the way the department works,” Bolton said. The businesses hosting green recycling containers are struggling with materials left outside the bins. “When you throw cardboard on the ground, it’s littering, not recycling.” The people of Shawnee County *want* to recycle, Bolton said. A lot of material is brought to the green bins. He believes we can solve the problem through curbside recycling.

Startup is costly. Bolton has

put together an extensive business plan, followed up with educational materials for the county commission, and researched recycling programs including one in Phoenix. Bolton said that instead of putting all the curbside recycling containers at once as Phoenix did, recycling should be rolled out slowly according to refuse routes. Bolton received a good response to a county survey about curbside recycling: 96% were for curbside recycling and 63% of those were willing to pay for it. He kept track of the responses by zip code and wants to start curbside recycling first in the zip code areas where there was the most positive survey response. He suggested having sign-up locations at community centers, and homeowners association and neighborhood improvement association meetings.

With current recycling efforts, 600 tons of recyclable materials are kept out of the landfill. Curbside recycling could mean even more. The current landfill was started in 1979 and was supposed to last another 19 years. It might last longer, but not forever. “When [landfills] close, they don’t go away,” Bolton said. “When you bury trash, it doesn’t go anywhere. It does not decompose.” Bolton told about a landfill in New York, where they dug back to the 1920s and found recognizable food and newspapers that were still readable.

The landfill at the end of 21st street that was closed 25 years ago still requires a lot of maintenance. When capped with dirt, there is no air or sunlight to help with decomposition. The leakage has to be captured in a pond or well and pumped back up to the top. Then it trickles back down.

“You’ve got to have groundwater wells to test the water,” Bolton said. “You’ve got to have gas masks for the methane.” Bolton is not sure the landfill was closed correctly. The cap is eroding, there were no wells there, and they had to put in more gas

vents. “This probably will never go away,” Bolton said. It would be very difficult to do anything with the property, such as a use it for a Boy Scout camp, since the methane means there can be no fires!

“We have a well-run landfill now, but we need to preserve the life of the landfill,” Bolton said. “It takes about 10 years to site a new landfill, and everyone says: Not in my backyard.” With curbside recycling on regular trash routes, the back and forth travel to drop-off locations would be reduced.

The county would need a Materials Recycling Facility or MRF (a “merf”). Another company would come in and do this. Companies that would bring a MRF to Shawnee County want more than 600 tons per month, but Bolton said “It’s out there [the material that could be recycled countywide].”

“I know the commissioners would like curbside recycling,” Bolton said. “The sticking points are how to pay for it and how to insure the MRF is doing the right thing for us. In Arizona, they can get \$90 per ton, but here we would be lucky to get \$30 per ton because of the shipping costs to the coast.”

One way to charge for a county recycling program would be “mandatory pay, but volunteer participation.” Another way would be to charge \$5 per month for recycling. Other waste handlers could participate. Biodegradable bags could be offered for 50 cents per bag for leaves. A \$5 sticker could be offered for furniture. Bolton does not think anyone should be forced to recycle, but at least would like it to be offered for a decent price.

“It’s about doing what’s right, not how to get rich,” Bolton said. “It helps you out and helps out the community.”

Shawnee County voters to decide whether to continue electing county treasurer

To vote or not to vote? That's the question Shawnee County residents will be asked in the November election.

Shawnee County Commissioners have placed a question on the ballot asking voters to decide whether they will continue to elect their county treasurer or give up that right. If voters choose to give up their right to vote, the county treasurer will be selected by county commissioners rather than by voters.

"This is really about democracy," said Eileen King, a representative of the Kansas County Officials Association (KCOA). "We've come too far in this country to give up our right to vote, especially when it comes to electing county officials – the ones who are making decisions that affect us so close to home."

KCOA is sponsoring a campaign, leading up to the election, that is designed to educate Shawnee County voters about the ballot question and the implications of not having citizens involved in the selection of their county officials. Those implications include:

*Eliminating the system of checks-and-balances we currently have in place to provide independent oversight and accountability for how our county tax dollars are collected and managed.

* Concentrating the bulk of power in our county government to a three-person commission with little to no oversight by the people.

* Triggering the potential for higher costs for taxpayers as appointed officials traditionally earn higher salaries than elected officials when the position becomes a career for someone rather than an act of public service.

The question, referred to as the "Shawnee County Treasurer Question," will appear as the third question on side two of the November ballot.

The question reads: "Shall the following be adopted? The office of Shawnee County Treasurer shall cease to be elected and shall become a position appointed by the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Shawnee, Kansas."

Voters who wish to retain their right to elect the county treasurer, should vote "No" on the question. It is important to note that the ballot question does not impact the tenure of Larry Wilson, the cur-

rent Shawnee County treasurer. Wilson would continue to serve until the end of his term in 2013.

"There are so many important state and federal decisions on the ballot this election," said King. "Our goal is to make sure Shawnee County voters don't overlook the importance of this local issue."

Voters interested in learning more about this ballot question may visit www.Facebook.com/VoteNo2010.

"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows on the end the triumph of high achievement; and who, at the worst, if he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt

New Member Event on Sept 23, 2010

WOW! What fun! As Marge Heeney said the next day, the rain made it so much better! It poured for off and on during the evening, but we were all having so much fun inside that it hardly mattered...people arrived and folded up their wet umbrellas and joined the fun inside!

Nancy Shaughnessy, Membership Chair, hosted and organized the event. 30 members and 12 guests were present. Thanks go to Theresa Stambaugh for the lovely centerpieces and Maryanna Quilty and Anita Epps for assistance with registration. The results? 5 new members and one renewal!! New members had a chance to take home a centerpiece or a package of notecards if they chose to join that evening. It was a great birthday party for the League. We plan to welcome all of our new members at the October Tuesday Topics meeting.

When I volunteered to organize the Silent Auction fundraising part of the Member Event this year, I had no idea that it would mushroom as it did! Donations came in up to the last day and committee members helped with sorting, “basketing” and pricing, transporting, arranging, “selling” and helping with the payment for the treasures everyone won. I thank a super committee of Char Adair, Anita Epps, Diana Siegle, Nancy Warner, Judy Moler, Alta Morris, Georgia Sandlin, Liz Post, Karen Meyer and Mary Anne Shrake...and, I especially thank Barbara McCandless for all the baskets that she brought over early on and everyone else who made donations. Ron Rohleder put up with a house full of items and wrapping supplies for a long time, and it is nice to have some of our house space back! Couldn't have done it without all of you...THANKS AND MORE THANKS!!

Betsy Rohleder

“ I believe in getting into hot water. I think it keeps you clean.”

G.K. Chesterton

As long as you're going to think anyway —you might as well think BIG.”

Donald Trump

“We must always change, renew, rejuvenate ourselves: Otherwise, we harden.”

Goethe

OCTOBER 30 – 9:30 to 2:00

FALL KANSAS LEAGUE DAY

Topeka Public Library

ONLY \$20

Lunch provided

Need Reservations Right Away - Call Diane Kuhn 913-631-9499

Featuring

Candidate Forum 11:15

Secretary of State

Kris Kobach and Chris Biggs



In Auditorium

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

IMPORTANT FOR ALL KANSAS LEAGUE MEMBERS TO ATTEND

Bring Questions

Also

Morning Session: Hot Topics in New Legislature

After Lunch for League Members: National League Representative

Donna Marie Lossing-Jones from Columbus Ohio

Sent to Kansas to give us a Workshop on

Membership Recruitment/Leadership

**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 Wiegman, Treasurer, 2805 SW Tall Grass DR., Topeka, KS 66614-6206.

(785) 478-1679