



Missouri Voter

Volume 76, Issue 5

The League of Women Voters of Missouri

September/October 2015

President's Message



Elaine Mitchell Blodgett
LWVMO President

Dear League Members,

As I write this letter on a perfectly beautiful September day, I am struck by the headlines in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: "Legislators take time in Session to raise funds", "Quick Loans, Big Bucks" and "Parole Board works with empty seats, behind closed doors" That, along with people trudging and crossing waters to get out of the fighting in Syria and the Middle East into Europe which is in panic mode, and fires engulfing California, do not make for light reading. It's frustrating. But it's the state of the state of Missouri that concerns me.

For instance, Missouri doesn't do a good job of regulating title loans or classifying them as such. According to the article, the last time legislation was introduced was 2011 in the Senate, to regulate what are actually title loans, but it went nowhere. That Senator indicated that lenders form a powerful lobby in the State Capitol.

The public finds out in another article that the September veto session is not just for overrides, retention or work. There is other, more pressing business. It's the time for 'white envelopes'. Legislators party on while lobbyists come and enjoy food and company while handing over contributions. One young legislator from my area of the state is quoted as saying, "This is just a chance that they get to hand it to us instead of putting it in a P.O. Box. Everybody does it." (An answer no parent or teacher ever wants to hear you to say.)

And another article wonders why vacant seats on the state parole board haven't been filled by the Governor. Why is that?

(Continued on page 2)

CALENDAR 2015

- November 6—
LWVMO Board Mtg.
- Sedalia
- **November 7—
LWVMO
Fall Conference**
-Sedalia

2016

- January 6—
Legislature Convenes
- **January 12—
LWVMO
Capitol Action Day—**
Jefferson City
- January 23—
LWVMO Board Mtg.
(Snowdate: Jan. 30)
- February 23—
Candidate Filing Day
-Jefferson City
- March 5—LWVMO
Board Mtg. -
Columbia

LWV Websites:

lwvmissouri.org

(state)

lwv.org (national)

President's Message (continued)

WE have a national study this year about money and politics and if there ever was a state that needed us to study and act, this is the one. Missouri needs close scrutiny by the public about what legislators' jobs might really be. Should it be eight and out to a high paying job? --- lobbying? Politics is the business of dealing with people's needs and debating about those needs, and about having enough money to run the state and pay the bills. It's also 'horse trading'. It ought to be listening in the hearings the petitions of both citizens and special interest groups. It ought to involve thinking and respect for all opinions being expressed.

Who do you think is winning? What are we going to contribute to the discussion and act upon? When will we make some noise?

To end on a cheery note:

It is early Fall and we have many celebrations like high school football games, last weekends at the lake for swimming and boating, a multitude of festivals involving food from 'the old country', in Columbia, the 'Roots and Blues Festival--music and barbecue, not to forget, caramel apples and pumpkins and Halloween costumes.. So while we ponder what to do with serious issues, get out enjoy the weather and the festivity. *And I hope to see you at our Annual Fall Conference in Sedalia on November 7!*

—Elaine Mitchell Blodgett
LWVMO President

In Memoriam—Maydell Senn

Maydell Henry Senn died Monday, Aug. 31, 2015 in Lebanon, N.H., after a courageous battle with kidney cancer. After retiring, she traveled extensively around the world with many of her friends and began actively working in the League of Women Voters of Columbia-Boone County, serving as chair of the Voter Service committee and local League president (2002-4). She also served on the LWVMO Board. Before moving to the green mountains of Vermont to live with her son in the fall of 2013, she was awarded the Columbia LWV's Eleanor Goodge award for her many years of service to the League.

Hotel Accommodations—Fall Conference—Sedalia

If you want to come to Sedalia on Friday, there is a block of rooms being held **until October 16** at the Comfort Inn, 3600 West Broadway, Sedalia, MO 65301, Phone: 660-829-5050.



**League of Women Voters of Missouri
 Fall Conference
 Saturday, November 7, 2015
 9:00 a.m. (registration) to 3:00 p.m.
 State Fair Community College
 Thompson Conference Center,
 Heckart Building
 Sedalia**

Join us as we meet our old and new friends in League in Sedalia for our annual Fall Conference. Sessions will include:

- ◆ Information on the National Study of Money in Politics
- ◆ The Dreams of a County Election Clerk, featuring Nick LaStrada, Pettis County Clerk
- ◆ Using Local Issues to Grow Your League—Taking a Risk!
- ◆ Fundraising for Local and State Leagues—a practical workshop
- ◆ Looking Ahead to the next Legislative Session

Plus:

- ◆ A Silent Auction Fundraiser
- ◆ A day to celebrate the League and all we do around the State

*Fall Conference Registration Form
 November 7, 2015 - - Sedalia, Missouri*

Local League _____ # _____

Names of Persons attending:

Registration fee is \$20 per person until October 23. After that date, the fee is \$30.

Amount enclosed: _____

Mail to:

LWVMO, 8706 Manchester Road, Suite 104, St. Louis, MO 63144

Local League News

LWV of Columbia-Boone County

LWV of Columbia-Boone County had our fall kickoff picnic with beautiful weather on September 10. We have also been busy working on the two LWVUS consensus studies. We had a forum in September with Dr. Justin Dyer speaking on the Constitution's amendments and the amending process. It was very helpful for our members in preparing for our consensus meeting on October 28. We have two more public events for Money in Politics planned in October and November. We are also co-sponsoring with the Columbia Board of Health a forum on the health and environmental effects of GMOs on October 20.

—Carol Schreiber

LWV of Kansas City/J/C/P Counties

LWV of KC/J/C/P Counties participated in Women's Equality Week. On August 24th we hosted "Women as Leaders—Celebrating 95 years of Women Voting & the LWV" with Sandy Praeger, former KS Insurance Commissioner and Kay Barnes, former Mayor of KC as guest speakers. We co-sponsored Jessica Neuwirth founder of Equality Now, Director of NY Office on UN Commission on Human Rights and author of "*Equal Means Equal: Why the time for the Equal Rights Amendment is Now.*" We are proud of the leadership roles Jane McClain & Alice Kitchen had with the WEW Coalition. This presentation is available on our web page www.lwvkc.org.

Our September regular meeting was focused on Money, Politics and the 1st Amendment. Our speaker was William Raney, a partner in the Capielevitz & Canter Law Firm and an expert on the 1st Amendment. He presented perspectives on the importance of freedom of speech, including for corporations, and on the use of money as a vehicle to enable free speech. He spoke of the benefits of more rather than less speech associated with elections so that voters have a greater opportunity to learn the background and positions of candidates. This presentation is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsJdyjnSM1U>

—Linda Vogel Smith and Donna Hoch

LWV of Moberly-Randolph County

The Moberly-Randolph County League is going into the upcoming year energized by their five new members. The first meeting in September consisted of a business meeting and introduction of new officers. Moberly Leaguers appreciated the invitation to join Boone County in special program meetings and several hoped to attend. After a report from the LWVMO Board from Janie Riley and Nancy Copenhaver, members discussed possible fund-raising options. Plans were made to participate in National Voter Registration Day along with inviting the county clerk to a future meeting to deputize all members. Members voted to help fund delegates to the LWVMO Fall Conference in Sedalia on November 7. The Observer program was discussed with some changes in personnel and additional boards/commissions to be added to the program.

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Suffrage Memorial

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) has agreed to become a partner with the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association (TPSMA) in creating a memorial that celebrates the fight for women's suffrage and its relevance today. This decision is particularly timely in light of the upcoming 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment in 2020.

TPSMA has been working to ensure that the proud history of the successful struggle for women's voting rights will be permanently commemorated at the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial, located on two acres within the Occoquan Regional Park in northern Virginia. This location was selected because it is in close proximity to the former location of the Occoquan Workhouse, where dozens of suffragists were incarcerated in 1917 for picketing the White House. The inhumane treatment of those brave women became public knowledge and in turn became one of the significant turning points in the fight for the 19th Amendment. Of course the history of the fight for women's suffrage is much longer and broader, with many turning points less celebrated but equally significant. Many critical milestones will be commemorated on the 19 informative stations that will be installed throughout the park.

Since suffragist leaders, like our founder Carrie Chapman Catt, built no monuments to themselves, this memorial will be one of the very few physical reminders of the importance of their movement.

Although the park is being built and maintained by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (now known as NOVA Parks), the funds for the memorial itself must be raised privately. TPSMA's initial goal is \$1 million by November 30, 2015 and they are reaching out to many individuals, groups, and corporate donors.

You can learn more by visiting the Turning Point website, www.suffragistmemorial.org.

Gifts of \$1,000 or more will be recognized on the Donor Wall, and three state Leagues (Colorado, Tennessee, and Virginia) have already contributed at that level.

The Missouri state League would like to raise \$1000 in order to have our (collective) name on the memorial. We are encouraging local Leagues as well as individuals to contribute to the LWVMO Education Fund for this particular purpose. *Late News: we have already received a number of pledges from local Missouri Leagues and individuals for this project toward our goal of \$1000!!*

LWV of Moberly-Randolph County (continued)

Programming for six months was discussed with December being a social/dinner meeting and May will be a dinner meeting with reports from observers. October will include consensus on Amending the Constitution and January will be Money in Politics. The meeting concluded with a program on the upcoming Veto Session of the Missouri Legislature.

—Nancy Copenhaver

LWV of Southwest Missouri

We have just completed a 2-year study on the Accessibility and Affordability of Mental Health Services for Adults in Greene County, which resulted in a 25-page report that will be shared with our community. The study involved interviews with over 20 mental health providers in our area, plus data was collected from family and patient focus groups. Earlier this year, Mr. Mark Stringer, Director of Behavioral Health for the Missouri Department of Health, was our guest at a general meeting to discuss the status and services of mental health care in our region. It was a packed house of over 80 in attendance and the League received much publicity for hosting this event. We recently hosted a luncheon for these mental health providers to celebrate the release of our study report, to share our appreciation for their participation, and to plan the next steps for advocacy and awareness in our community. All the providers expressed a strong interest in establishing a Mental Health Council to share ideas and best practices in order to better coordinate services. The League will chair this Council in the beginning stages to get it launched, then will hand off the leadership to the mental health providers. Our hope is that this is the beginning of a community conversation on how best to improve the delivery of mental health services in Greene County.

We also recently helped to register the 51 new citizens sworn in at the Naturalization Ceremony on September 16. It's always a heartwarming ceremony and the League is honored to be asked to participate each year.

—Leslie Carrier

LWV of St. Louis

Patricia Bynes, Democratic Committeewoman from Ferguson and Cara Spencer, newly elected St. Louis Alderwoman inspired a full room at our September 16th Kickoff. The topic was "Post Ferguson: What Comes Next" and after brief statements they answered questions from the audience for almost an hour. These two young women have been on the front lines for social justice and meaningful change in our community. At the end, we thanked them for their continued commitment and gave them a standing ovation. October will be busy in St. Louis. We will celebrate our many volunteers at an October 2nd picnic, put out a small Voters Guide for St. Louis, Jefferson and St. Charles County, facilitate St. Louis City Tenant Advisory Board elections and host our major fundraiser, the annual Theatre Party. We are busy planning the September 3, 2016 Celebrate the Vote festival in downtown St. Louis to commemorate the 1916 "Walkless Talkless" demonstration of 3,000 suffragists outside the Democratic National Convention. We hope that many of you will join us and wear the yellow sashes we will give out proudly!

—Kathleen Farrell

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Recent Contributions Received:

- ◆ LWVMO contribution for \$100.00
- ◆ LWVMO memorial contribution in memory of Maydell Senn.
- ◆ Memorial contributions in memory of Joan Mills for LWVMO and LWVMO Education Fund.
- ◆ Contribution for LWVMO Education Fund for SEMO for \$25.00.
- ◆ Contribution in memory of Joan Mills for LWVMO Education Fund ear marked for LWV Kansas City/J/C/P Counties.
- ◆ Non member contribution received for LWVMO Education Fund.
- ◆ LWVMO contributions from board members at the September board meeting.

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