

MissouriVOTER

Volume 67 Issue 4

League of Women Voters

July/August 2006

President's letter

One of the speakers at a recent Chamber of Commerce meeting was Matt Boatright, Deputy Director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture. His topic – teamwork. As he described the draft horse hitch and the team work required by the three pairs of horses pulling the wagon, each with their specific job, my thoughts went immediately to the League.

In League we are three – national, state and local. Each with a primary function – and each level with equal importance and responsibility to “get the job done.” Each supporting the other two.

National Convention brings all three levels together – national board and staff, state board delegates, and local league (or grassroots) delegates for the purpose of reviewing the past and setting the path for the next two years. It is a very busy 3–4 days. Discussions are lively on Program, how to provide service to the local and state levels, and of course, the budget required to pay for the first two.

The delegation voted a three year study on Immigration. They also approved a PMP increase, part of which is specifically to pay for this new study.

Going to convention is an experience I wish every member could have – it is invigorating and challenging. In my years as a League member, I have attended five national conventions. Convention is not just about the formal and scheduled meetings, it is about the interaction with League members from all over the United States and learning how others are dealing with the same problems we are here in Missouri (two major ones are members and money). I guarantee you will come home with “your batteries charged,” a head full of ideas,

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Library Study Update

Since LWVMO approved the first phase of the library study in 2003, Leagues around the state have gathered information on library service and governance issues. That phase of the study has drawn to a close, and it's time to see if we have consensus on issues relating to what we have discovered.

LWVMO has approved a series of questions to be put to the members this fall, and those questions, along with documents that should help focus the discussion, will be sent to the local league presidents by mid-August. Local leagues should plan to have units to discuss and respond to the questions in time to return the responses to the committee before January 15, 2007. Those responses will be presented to the LWVMO board early next year, and with luck we can reach consensus on at least some of the questions.

Thanks to all of you who participated in the study. Regardless of the outcome, it's clear that we learned a great deal about how tax-supported public libraries function in Missouri.

Jo Sapp

Photo ID required for November 7 General Election

The passage and signing of Senate Bill 1014 requires all Missouri voters to present valid, non-expired photo ID in order to cast a regular ballot in the November 7 General Election. There has been much in the news about how many voters this will effect.

We are currently working with the Secretary of State's office on how the League can help in being sure all voters get the message, and help those who don't have a valid ID get one. We will be sending information soon to Local League presidents on this.

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stacks of information and ready to head back to field and make a difference.

Missouri had delegates in attendance from four of our local leagues, and from the state board. Following are comments from some of the delegates.

Mary

Delegate Notes from LWVUS Convention

Janice Dahl, LWV St. Louis

When 1,000 well-spoken, intelligent women collide at a national convention of the League of Women Voters, good things are bound to happen in the League of Women Voters of Missouri! The national convention is an amazing experience. There are a wealth of great ideas flowing from leagues all across the country, many that will work great for our state and local leagues to help us boost membership, step up fundraising, and get the word out about the LWV's incredible programs. There is no end to the creativity at work on the Democracy Agenda as well as the many other noteworthy projects. It's invigorating just to feel the energy at the convention. Now it's just up to us to pick the ideas that will work best for Missouri and our local leagues and run with them with that same sense of excitement and purpose.

Rosemary Stevens, LWV Columbia

You asked for a brief summary of convention thoughts.

Where does one begin? This is a very energizing, instructive, and valuable experience. It certainly brings home what the League is and how the process works.

Overall I felt the organization and flexibility of the planners was great and I admired the way LWVUS kept to the program and procedures.

The workshops on Dialogue, Membership, Fundraising, and networking were well done and informative. It makes it hard to settle on

one type of approach when there are so many ideas that are produced from attending and listening to everyone. I did feel the Delegate Briefing was not worth the time since, for the time I was there, all that was discussed was what was already available in the Workbook and Program. I feel a better use of the Briefing would perhaps be an Orientation into LWVUS positions and procedures for getting to positions.

The caucuses were a little less predictable in quality. The Revitalizing the League seemed to become a discussion between two or three people. However, Sarah Diefendorf did supply a good breakdown of the process for developing a study and reaching a position—a kind of flowchart format. It would be neat if they would perfect it and put copies of on the LWVUS site.

The UN caucus spent the first ½ hour to 45 minutes discussing how to get a speaker for a local league, the cost, and could they charge a fee for the event. I left since I wasn't sure it was going anywhere and joined the networking workshop for LL of 100 and over.

The International Criminal Court was well worthwhile.

Meet the candidates was not particularly effective. The introductions made by each candidate took up all the time so there really was no time to talk with them.

I had a chance to talk with most of the tables there representing issues brought up as resolutions or not-recommended items. The information most of them had was informative and it was good to have a chance to ask questions. I was glad to see the CARL people and the LWV MN paper ballot/audit trail people seemed to reach an agreement so they could present their resolution/not-recommended item as a joint group. I had talked with both of them and the differences seemed very minor.

Overall it is a memorable experience and I absolutely gush when I'm asked how my weekend went.

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Jeanne Morrel-Franklin, LWV St. Louis

At the recent League Convention in Minneapolis, the incoming President Mary Wilson's acceptance speech particularly resonated with me. The speech could be applied to the local League. She said every aspect of the things Leagues do is focused around some aspect of promoting democracy. She said the League knows how to have an impact on public policy. We promote good public policy and we work toward good government by educating citizens to the vote. She said the league has a reputation for integrity and for being unbiased...--There is depth to our talk, we know what we are talking about, and we should build on that reputation.

Maydell Senn, LWVMO Board

At National Convention I attended Meetings, Networking Sessions and Plenary Sessions and I am organizing the notes and materials I received to share. One of the most interesting meetings I attended was an "Introduction to Convention" meeting. The program planning process and the LWVUS Board recommended items and how they are decided was explained. Based on the program planning responses from state and local Leagues the Board makes their recommendations. The Board recommended a 3 year program study of Immigration Policy with 74 Leagues recommending this in their National Program Planning responses. A list of Not-Recommended items for study was listed in our Convention Workbook and of the 72 items only 3 were recommended by more than 10 leagues and of those, Apportionment was recommended by 35 as the next highest. This alerted me to how important the National Program Planning responses by local and state Leagues are to directing the LWVUS Board.

Dates to Remember

Aug.	19	LWVMO Board Meeting Mexico
Nov.	7	General Election
	10	LWVMO Board Meeting Sedalia
	11	Fall Conference Sedalia – SFCC Campus
Jan.	6	LWVMO Board Meeting Columbia
	9	New Legislator's breakfast Jefferson City
Mar	10	LWVMO Board Meeting St. Louis
	TBD	Legislative Day
May	4	LWVMO Board
	5-6	State Convention

Voters Guide

By the time you receive this, the Primary election will be over. We will begin compiling the information for the Voters Guide for the November General Election immediately so we can go to print just as soon as all candidates and ballot issues have been certified. Again this year, we received a grant from Harrah's to cover the cost of printing.

Fall Conference

The annual Fall Conference will be held Saturday, November 11 in Sedalia. The Board will be finalizing plans for this event at the August 19 meeting – if you have suggestions for speakers or topics, let us know. Save the date and plan to come – you'll be glad you did!

How League Sets Its Course: From Study to Action (*Adapted from an article in the Wisconsin Voter*)

The League process, from studying an issue to establishing a position to acting on it, should be transparent. As it gives the League strong credibility, it ought to be revisited often for members both new and old.

Let us start on the local level. Every year, local Leagues hold a gathering (usually in January) to discuss and determine what topic to study in the coming year. Topics can range from education to gun control, to a proposed new park or power plant. The topics that get the most votes go before the local Board to assess timeliness, interest to members, and the potential for the League to effect change. Then they go to a vote of the entire membership at the Annual Meeting. The top vote-getter is the topic of study.

Now the study begins. The board names a study chair, who recruits other members to join the committee, which convenes to begin researching the issue in summer or fall. As they gather more information, they share it via newsletter articles, meetings, and guest speaker events.

Towards the end of this process, the committee formulates a set of “consensus questions” to draw out member agreement. These questions are posed at a single meeting, and then the committee compiles members’ responses in order to draft a position, known as a “consensus.” While this consensus can include dissenting opinions, the final League position must be voted on and approved one final time by the membership. Then the League position can be acted on by the members through contacts with government officials and the media.

The state League sets its position in a similar way. The primary difference is the timeline. State studies and national studies are usually two year affairs from start to finish, but could be longer. (For example, our Library Study will be a four year study; the national Immigration study just voted at convention is three years). The vote to determine the topic(s) of state study is held at the biennial Convention.

This process, at its heart, is what gives the League its reputation for being informed and reliable. The deliberation, the push to understand an issue fully, and the final decision by all members are what set the League apart from many other grassroots organizations.

Raise Funds and Have Fun Traveling

The LWVMO has made arrangements with Travel Concepts International to encourage groups to book travel through their company. For each League member and their guests that book travel plans with Travel Concepts, the company will pay \$50, which will be split between LWVMO and the local league. You can call them at 1-800-762-4216, or navigate their website at www.tcitravel.com. Plans can be made on the website by destination or travel dates.

The Missouri VOTER is published bi-monthly by the League of Women Voters of Missouri (St. Louis)

Subscriptions are \$2 per year.

Kathleen Boswell, Editor

Periodicals postage paid at St. Louis, MO 63144

USPS 593-960

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:

Missouri Voter, LWVMO

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

All other correspondence to Mary Merritt at the same address.

Voice: 314-961-6869 FAX: 314-961-8393

Email: lwwmo@yahoo.com

Members in the News

Dr. Margaret L. Harlan was recently elected Chair of the Missouri State Juvenile Justice Advisory Group (JJAG). Dr. Harlan is a psychologist and has served as a member of JJAG since 1999.

We were unable to include the picture of Dr. Harlan

JJAG's membership includes individuals from the judicial system, law enforcement, social services agencies, and educational institutions. Federal monies from the Department of Justice are funneled through JJAG and the Department of Public Safety to agencies and programs for prevention or rehabilitation of youth in the juvenile justice system. This year more than \$3.5 million in grants will be awarded in Missouri.

A 2006 national report on juvenile offenders and victims shows the rate of juvenile violent crime arrests has consistently decreased since 1994, falling to a level not seen since the 1970s.

Dr. Marge Harlan
LWV Sedalia-Pettis County

Dr. Harlan has also been active in establishing local programs serving children and families in the Sedalia area as co-founder of CASA, the women's shelter, and Child Safe, a child advocacy center.

Internet---Who, me??

(this was taken from an article by Ed Gracely, in the New Jersey Voter)

Some League members who do not own a computer may be discouraged by the amount of activity that takes place on-line nowadays. This issue disproportionately affects Members-At-Large (MAL's), because they may not have a nearby local League to send them a printed bulletin, invite them to meetings, or communicate in other ways. Thus the increasing use of e-mail and websites leaves the non-computer users ever further behind.

What do you do when you keep seeing notices about those wonderful "lists" you can join and wonderful websites full of information, none of which you can access?

Nowadays you do not need your own computer to use any of this! The secret is that libraries usually have Internet access for their patrons. And once you have Internet access, you can do e-mail as well. Most libraries also offer classes for beginners.

How can you get e-mail without paying for it? Simple—several companies offer free e-mail accounts (paid for with all your ads you will have to put up with, of course). Hotmail (from Microsoft) and Yahoo mail are probably the most popular, but there are others as well. Both are easy to use. If you think you might forget about your account for a while, choose Yahoo, because Hotmail accounts expire if not visited every 30 days.

At the LWVUS convention, one speaker strongly urged every League member to get e-mail and learn to use it. I agree!