

Missouri Voter

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The League of Women Voters

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.



That is our Mission Statement. How are we measuring up? In June, our state president Jo Sapp, along with state board members Lois Detrick and Mary Merritt, attended the LWVUS Council in Washington, D.C. The leader of each delegation had one minute to present highlights of their state's activities. For Missouri's moment in the spotlight, Jo said,

“Over the past two years, the Missouri League learned what it's like to be wanted. A not-for-profit that provides human services in eight northeastern Missouri counties asked us to provide voting information to its 120 employees at its first-ever resource fair. The Missouri Bar asked us to participate in a summit on civic education with an emphasis on separation of powers. The secretary of state asked us to help educate the public on proposed voter ID requirements and to testify before the general assembly on the issue. A major corporation asked us to conduct voter registration for its employees and was so grateful that it paid for 25,000 Voter Guides to be distributed around the state. Of course we said yes every time we were asked. It's very nice to be wanted.”

One minute. How much more she could have said in five minutes or 10!

Those who attended the 58th State Convention this past spring will remember LWVUS Director Donna Lauffer's program on the *360 Degrees of League* – the circle formed by membership, action, fundraising, and visibility. Jo's remarks touched on each part of the circle.

We have done well. We can do better! Read on.

Membership

by Jo Sapp, LWVMO President

It's no secret that nationwide membership in the League of Women Voters has declined over the years. Missouri has followed the trend. In July 1998 we had 968 members in 14 Leagues. By July 2007 we had 813 members in eight Leagues. The good news is that our local Leagues are growing. The bad news is that there are fewer of them.

Last year LWVUS launched the pilot phase of a membership recruitment initiative to test strategies developed in cooperation with a communication consulting firm. The idea was to select a target group and devise messages and strategies designed to appeal to that group. Five local Leagues from different geographic areas participated in the pilot phase, and every single one of them met or exceeded their goal of a 5% increase in membership. In fact, every single one of them experienced at least a 10% net increase, with some going as high as 20%.

A key finding from the first year was that increased visibility equates with increased membership. LWVUS has established a Storybank, where members are encouraged to share a brief piece about their experience with the League. I posted mine, and a surprising number of people have seen it. You can find the Storybank by following this path: www.LWV.org Home>For Members>Membership Recruitment Initiative>League Storybank.

Aside from visibility and the value of communicating the LWV message concisely and consistently, one of the most successful tactics was simply asking people to join—at

meetings, in League materials, in media releases—whenever and wherever the opportunity arose. For the most part the pilot Leagues did the sort of thing they had been doing all along, but in an organized manner.

This is good news for the pilot Leagues, of course, but it's also good news for the rest of us. This year LWVUS will select five states to take the lead in a project that can be extended nationwide. LWVUS will train the trainers, who will in turn train local Leagues to implement the strategies that worked so well in the pilot phase and mentor them through an implementation process.

LWVMO has applied to be one of the five lead Leagues. If we are chosen, two project coordinators will go to Washington, D.C. for training in early September, and shortly after that training at the participating sites in Missouri will begin.

The life blood of LWVMO is local Leagues, and our success depends on your success. Whether or not we are chosen to be part of this initiative, we will monitor it closely. The LWVMO board is committed to devoting its resources, energy, and talents to membership recruitment.



LWV Members at State Convention, 2007.

Fundraising

A few years ago, the LWVMO, led by Elaine Blodgett and Kathryn Allen, established the Public Service Endowment Fund with the original member pledges being evenly split between LWVMO and LWVMO Education Fund. The purpose of the fund is to build a capital asset that provides income to be used for operating the state office.

Originally the funds were invested in Certificates of Deposit with the interest earned paid to the respective fund operating accounts. Recently the board voted to invest these funds in (we hope) growth stocks to increase the capital amount, thereby increasing the potential earnings. Currently, the value of each fund is approximately \$20,000.

As you contemplate making contributions to the League, you might want to give consideration to these funds. Remember – your donation is invested, and the League only uses the interest earned from the investment.

Contributions can be made at any time and in any amount. The same tax rules apply as apply to any donations to the League: Ed Fund contributions are tax deductible, LWVMO contributions are not. To make a contribution to either of these funds, make your check payable to the LWVMO Endowment Fund or the LWVMO Ed Fund Endowment Fund.

The League also welcomes contributions for its normal operating expenses. For more information about making a donation to the League, please contact the League office lwmom@yahoo.com or phone 314-961-6869. Your support is needed and appreciated.

Working Together

This appeared in the recent LWV St. Louis newsletter:

“Dear Members and Friends,

I would like to take this opportunity to salute the League of Women Voters of Missouri. It has (all too) recently occurred to me the important role that the state League plays in achieving our goals of education and advocacy. It provides us with a unified voice and delivers our message with an impact that could never be achieved by eight small, separate groups of people in local Leagues across the state.

Whether addressing local or state issues, we wield more influence with legislators and other decision makers when we speak with a cohesive voice. Our local program positions are in concert with the LWVMO positions on government, natural resources and social policy. . . .

Doris Buzzell”

President, St. Louis



State Programs

The following changes to the LWVMO program were approved at Convention 2007:

Education

Support for equal opportunity in education, access to quality programs and adequate financing. (existing language)

(the following language was added to the education position)

The League did not reach consensus in support of Charter schools. However, given the fact that Missouri law allows them to exist, we believe that they should ensure:

- Equality of opportunity in education, access to quality education and adequate financing for students in charter schools as those in traditional public schools.
- Charter school sponsors should have additional documented oversight responsibilities.
- Charter schools should be funded at the same rate per student as those in traditional public schools.
- Charter schools governance/operations should go through the same process of mediation as in traditional public schools.
- Charter schools should not become Educational Agencies.
- Charter schools should not be extended beyond those permitted in Missouri State Statutes as of December 2006.

Public Libraries

Support of a public library system as a basic community service with a long-term, assured, stable and adequate funding source.

Support of access by all persons to public library services as a major source of knowledge and information necessary for informed, active participation in a democratic society.

Non-Partisan Court Plan

by Rosemary Stevens, LWV Columbia/Boone County

Early in the 20th century, political machines and party bosses in St. Louis and Kansas City largely controlled the election of judges. In 1940, the Missouri Non-Partisan Court Plan ended this practice by helping ensure the independence and integrity of the judiciary by shielding candidates from undue pressure.

The "Missouri Plan" has been adopted in over 30 states. Judges are nominated by a judicial commission and then appointed by the governor. After 12 months in office, non-partisan appointed judges must go before the voters in a retention election. A similar retention election occurs at the end of each term of office. If a judge does not receive a majority of votes, the judge's office becomes vacant at the end of its present term. The judicial commission then nominates three candidates for the position, and the governor appoints one to fill the vacancy.

In the early 1980s when this Plan was being questioned, the LWVMO did a study and developed a position statement in support of the Plan. Now a partisan court objective has been reintroduced. This situation has prompted the LWVMO to consider a restudy on whether the formerly held league position on the Missouri Non-partisan Court Plan should be reinstated.

For more information, go to www.mobar.org and search for Missouri Court Plan.



LWVMO President Jo Sapp (far right) on the panel of presidents at National Council, 2007.

Can We Really Do ALL That?

by Jo Sapp, LWVMO President

Every second year, alternating with the national convention where positions are adopted and parliamentary procedure colors nearly every interaction, LWV presidents and leaders gather to approve the year's budget and learn from each other. In June Lois Detrick, president of the Springfield League, and I traveled with Mary Merritt, who serves on the LWVUS budget committee, to represent Missouri at this year's meeting in Washington, D.C.

For two days we attended heavy duty workshops interrupted by bouts of heavy duty schmoozing. Mary represented us ably, doing such a fine job on the budget that virtually no questions were asked. Lois and I took copious notes, and you'll probably be hearing a lot more about what we learned as the year goes by.

As a first-timer I was more than a little pleased to be invited to sit on a panel with LWVUS President Mary Wilson and Texas President Darlene Hicks. Carol Reimers, who handles membership and League support for LWVUS, moderated our informal talk on leadership issues from the various perspectives we represented. As immediate past president of the Columbia/Boone County League, I was there to represent the local point of view, which was no problem as I was too new to the LWVMO presidency to have a notion about what the job entails.

For over an hour we responded to the question posed in the session's title, "Can We Really Do ALL That?" I found myself listening more than talking, and taking notes, not only on what my fellow panelists said, but on the very wise comments that came from the audience. With that kind of leadership, the League has a very bright future, indeed.

Local Leagues

Congratulations to **Lois Bliss**, LWV St. Louis, who has been appointed to serve on the St. Louis County Public Library's long-range planning committee, filling a slot designated for the League. The County system has engaged library consultants from Minnesota, and ten to twelve meetings are anticipated. Lois was a key member of the LWVMO Library Study's steering committee and is active with the Friends of the Kirkwood Public Library.

We plan to include a Local Leagues column in each issue of the Voter. Please share your news – accomplishments, projects, awards – with us by emailing the office at lwvmo@yahoo.com or calling 314-961-6869. The due date for news is listed in the calendar on the back page. We look forward to hearing from you!

Energy Challenge

Replace the most frequently used lights in your house with Energy Star qualified compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs); these bulbs use only 25% of the energy of a standard incandescent bulb. They come in many shapes and sizes; some can even be used in dimmable fixtures.

“If every American home replaced just one light bulb with an Energy Star qualified bulb, we would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year, more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars.” www.Energystar.gov

To learn more about energy and the global climate change, plan now to attend the LWVMO Fall Conference on Saturday, Nov. 3, in Sedalia. More details in the next Voter.

Notes and Reminders

Comments? Suggestions? Questions? Your state board is here for you. Contact us at lwvmo@yahoo.com, phone 314-961-6869, fax 314-961-8393, or snail mail 8706 Manchester Road, Suite 104, St. Louis, MO 63144.

Constitution Day is Sept. 17. Please let us know what you did to celebrate and share this day with your community. We'll include your news in the upcoming Voter.

Immigration Study. How is the study going in your League? Remember, if you have questions or need more resources, you can contact our state Immigration Study coordinator, Judith Smart.

Ask Linda. If you have a question about the League's (national, state, local) rules and bylaws or the Education Fund, you can Ask Linda. If she doesn't know the answer, she'll find it.

2008 Calendars. The 2008 LWV Appointment Calendars are for sale. Many thanks to Rachel Farr Fitch, Calendar Chair, for directing this annual fundraising project. All profit from the calendar sales goes to the LWVMO general fund.

Thanks also to our office staff, Micki Hoffman and Julie Behrens and their great volunteer assistants: St. Louis members Barb Behiter, Mary Brown, Betty Ann Gilbert, Pat Jones, Enid Tennenbaum, and Sedalia member Mary Merritt.



2008 Calendars

On sale now!

8-1/2 by 11 appointment calendars - ideal for planning your year.

Incredibly, sensibly priced - great birthday and holiday gifts for your family and friends.

Thoughtful welcome to new League members or a thank you to speakers.

Buy a lot! Buy in bulk! Buy today!

Wholesale Group Sales

* 10-100 calendars, \$4.50/each plus actual cost of shipping.

* 101 or more calendars, \$4.00/each plus actual cost of shipping and imprinting. (You will be billed for your order.)

Individual Calendar Sales *Payment must accompany orders.*

1 calendar plus shipping: \$5 + \$2.40 = \$7.40

2 calendars plus shipping: \$10 + \$3.75 = \$13.75

3 calendars plus shipping: \$15 + \$5 = \$20

4-6 calendars: \$5 per calendar + \$6 shipping

7-9 calendars: \$5 per calendar + \$7.50 shipping

Please enter my order for _____ calendars @ \$_____ each plus shipping \$_____ for a total of \$_____ *Prepayment required for individual sales.*

Name of person placing order _____

League or organization (if applicable) _____

Ship to _____

Street or Post Office Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____ Email _____

Imprint (available on orders of 100 or more) Please print clearly: _____

Complete order form and mail to League of Women Voters of MO – Calendars,
8706 Manchester Road, Suite 104, St. Louis, MO 63144.

Telephone: (314) 961-6869 Fax: (314) 961-8393 Email: lwvmo@yahoo.com

LWVMO Calendar

Aug. 11 – State Board Meeting in Moberly;
lunch with Moberly League

Sept. 17 – Constitution Day

Sept. 20 – MoVoter article deadline

Nov. 2 – State Board Meeting in Sedalia;
supper with Sedalia League

Nov. 3 – Fall Conference at State Fair
Community College in Sedalia

Nov. 6 – Election Day

Feb. 1, 2008 – LWVUS deadline to receive
immigration consensus response forms



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 who 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.

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