



# Missouri Voter

Volume 68, Issue 6

The League of Women Voters

November/December 2007

## Fall Conference 2007

Another successful day!

More than 50 League members from across the state gathered November 3 at State Fair Community College in Sedalia for our annual Fall Conference. The day was a chance to meet new people and renew old friendships, learn more about the timely topics of Immigration and Climate Change, reaffirm our position on the Non-Partisan Court Plan and hear the presidents' updates on their local Leagues.

Thanks to the Sedalia League for arranging the conference facilities, the continental breakfast (with Mary's fudge!), and the catered lunch. It was a beautiful, invigorating, and fun day!

All the photos in this issue of the Voter were taken at Fall Conference, beginning with these from the "meet and greet."



Doris Buzzell and Mary Beth Reynolds



Liz Schmidt and Nancy Copenhaver



Linda Frazier and Maydell Senn

## [Immigration Panel](#)

By Judith Smart,  
LWVMO off board, Immigration Chair



The panel answers questions from LWV members. (l. to r.) Michelle Perry, Emily Haverkamp, Mihaela Britt, and Judith Smart (Immigration Chair)

As part of the LWVUS consensus on immigration, LWVMO was pleased to have three well-informed panel members speak at the Fall Conference. They were Michelle Perry, Field Officer for US Citizenship and Immigration Service, Emily Haverkamp, who specializes in immigration law, and Mihaela Britt, Scholar Coordinator, who advises foreign students at the University of Missouri.

Michelle spoke of her agency pre- and post- 9/11 and the process (paper trail) people must follow to become immigrants. Emily discussed good-faith marriages and the reverse brain drain brought about by companies moving overseas because they cannot get visas for the trained workers they need. Mihaela said Mizzou has 1400 foreign students on F1 non-immigrant visas and 800 scholars/researchers. She is an advocate for students to keep them legal. If they have a visa to attend Mizzou but do not show up for classes, the university notifies the federal government and then ICE takes over the search.

A point to ponder from Emily: Can you prove you are a United States citizen? Many older Americans may not have or be able to secure birth certificates; many people do not have a passport or, if they do, they don't carry it all the time. Legal immigrants must be able to prove their status. Can you prove you are a citizen?

## [Climate Change](#)

By Win Colwill and Donna Bergen,  
Energy Co-Chairs

The scientific evidence is clear. Our planet is warming. Climate change has already affected ecosystems, food production, animal species, and human health. Unless greenhouse gases are reduced significantly within the next few years, the "global tipping point" will be reached, and global warming becomes unstoppable. But we can, and must, do something about it. We can lighten our own carbon footprints, and we can vote for candidates who advocate meaningful greenhouse gas reduction policies.

Dr. Wendy Anderson, professor of biology and environment at Drury University, delivered this message when she addressed League members at Fall Conference. Using familiar examples to illustrate her points, as well as charts and graphs to explain the science of global warming, she kept Leaguers' undivided attention. Closing with her 3-year-old daughter's picture, Dr. Anderson stated, "Action to curb global warming may be the most important thing we will ever do."

Packets of background information, resource lists, and "how to" guides for individual and League climate change action were distributed. (If you would extra copies of this information, please contact Win or Donna at the League office.)



Wendy Anderson listens to a question as Win Colwill and Donna Bergen look on.

Dr. Anderson expressed her willingness to present her Power Point program to Leagues anywhere in the state. Contact her at: [wanderso@drury.edu](mailto:wanderso@drury.edu).

## ***Non-Partisan Court Plan***

*By Debby Howard, LWVMO Treasurer*

At the Special Membership meeting held Saturday, November 3, in Sedalia, MO, the delegates representing 7 of the 8 local Leagues in the state voted to reaffirm the state judicial position. This position and its background will be restored to the State Guide To Action.



Carol Portman gives background information on the Non-Partisan Court Plan before League voting.

The position will read as follows:

### **Statement of Position:**

**The court system should be fully unified. Complete supervisory and administrative control of the courts should be voted in the Supreme Court.**

**All courts should be courts of record.**

**All judges should be chosen by the Nonpartisan Court Plan, and the nonpartisan plan should be extended either by local option or by legislative action making it mandatory statewide.**

**All judges should be qualified members of the Bar.**

**Municipalities might maintain their own courts to hear cases involving alleged violations of their ordinances provided these courts met the standards of state courts.**



Chyanne Lockhart Carderella and Debby Howard at registration



## *Working Together, part 1*

*By Jo Sapp, LWVMO President*

In its three-part division the League of Women Voters mirrors the structure of our government and each level—Federal, State, Local—assumes responsibility for tracking the activities of the branch that it mirrors. The League’s non-hierarchical system allows a great deal of autonomy to each branch so long as everyone adheres to the broad general principles that give the League its identity.

A recent query from New Mexico generated a fair amount of chatter on the State Presidents’ listserv: How do states handle situations where a local League has a position on a local issue that requires state legislative approval and funding, particularly when there is no statewide position?

Several states, including Maryland, Connecticut, and Florida, follow a model that encourages local Leagues to take action on their positions at the state level, but only after review by the state president and the issue portfolio holder. Whenever it’s appropriate, the Florida state League will take steps to endorse the local action.

That approach makes sense to me. In this complex world the divisions of control and responsibility sometimes blur. Local League members often work on issues that straddle jurisdictional lines. Last year, for example, I sought and obtained permission from LWVMO to speak to the legislature on the cable franchise bill because its provisions were especially problematic for my home city of Columbia, even though LWVMO had no specific position on the issue.

National and State Leagues are small, administrative bodies. The many voices that make up our singular voice live at the local level and represent our strength. Crossing jurisdictional lines—by mutual consent—enhances our voice and power and makes us truly “the place where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.”



Jo Sapp and Elaine Blodgett



Lois Detrick

## *Working Together, part 2*

*By Lois Detrick, LWVMO Education Chair and President SWMO*

For a first time attendee, National Council this past June was an enlightening experience. The theme of Council was "Strengthening Our Leaders," and everything was geared to accomplishing exactly that.

The first thing to strike me was the people, officers and staff, who have been just names in the *National Voter*, and discovering how personable and easy to approach they are. But more than that, the conference was organized – from speakers to hand-outs, everything was focused and purposeful.

The opening workshop, "Strengthening Leaders and Building a Visible, Active League for Today!" signaled the whole intent of Council. Other workshops included Membership Recruitment Initiative, Election Reform, and Media Outreach.

A program on "Protecting Our Rights, Protecting Our Courts" highlighted the "least understood branch" of our government. A panel spoke on "Immigration Policy in the 21st Century," setting the stage for our immigration study. (This panel can be viewed on the LWV website.) The Council closed with the practical panel (of which Jo Sapp was a member) titled "Can We Really Do ALL That?"

The report on the Ed Fund was the most eye-opening for the variety and depth of involvement. For example, of the seven areas of action, the Voter Outreach, Voter Education's establishment of VOTE411.org netted 1,000 requests for information per second during peak usage, was covered by C-span, libraries referred the public to it, and Yahoo will carry it for the next two years.

In addition, the DC Voting Rights Education Project has 18 participating Leagues and 10 state conventions. There is concerted effort to get K-12 Civic Education back into school curriculum in those states which have dropped it, of which Missouri is one.

The League's efforts toward "Safeguarding U. S. Democracy: Promoting a Fair and Independent Judiciary" was honored with the American Bar Association Judicial Outreach Award in 2006.

This is just a sampling of what our League is doing. It is inspiring to be a part of such a vital organization that is relevant to our time and dedicated to Making Democracy Work!

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## [Legislative Preview](#)

*By Nancy Copenhaver, LWVMO Legislative Chair*

The 2008 Missouri Legislative Session should prove to be one of the more interesting sessions in a long time. Factors include: (1) a presidential election year, guaranteeing partisan politics will be ever present (2) a heated election for governor between the sitting governor and the sitting attorney general, as well as statewide races for lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, and treasurer (3) election year for all 163 House seats and 17 Senate seats (4) many term-limited legislators in the second big wave since term limits changed the face of the legislature, all trying to solidify their “legacy” as well as land a future job.

Possible measures include: requiring picture IDs to vote, attacks on the non-partisan court plan, vouchers and other means of privatizing education, efforts to reduce or slow the rise of property taxes which includes a city/rural disagreement as to the “fairness” of assessments, stem cell research, campaign finance issues (reinstate limits on campaign contributions thrown out by the court), tweaking the education foundation formula to encourage schools to drop their lawsuit against the state, looking for solutions to provide more funding for higher education institutions to reduce the rising costs to students, immigration issues, dealing with collective bargaining for public employees as allowed by last spring’s Supreme Court ruling, and, of course, continued work on health care issues in the rewriting of the old Medicaid laws.

Legislative priorities of LWVMO will be set by the Board after the Legislative Committee meets on November 26. Opinion sheets completed by attendees at the Fall Conference indicate that the six priorities from 2007 are still of concern, with perhaps the addition of immigration and the non-partisan court plan. Members who have additional concerns are urged to share those with your local legislative committee, local president, or any state board member.

## [MissouriVoter Delivery Options](#)

At the November board meeting, your board discussed ways to cut expenses without cutting service to the League’s members. One possibility is to email the *MissouriVoter* to those members who would like to receive it online. It would be sent to your inbox, in color, in PDF format. It would be the newsletter seen on the website, only electronically delivered to you. Each newsletter sent this way would save the League 26 cents.

However, it is your choice. **If you prefer to receive your newsletter from the post office, you may continue to do so.** If you prefer an online newsletter, we want to accommodate you.

Right now, we are in the survey stage because we need to know if it would be worthwhile to email any newsletters. If you want your *MissouriVoter* sent as an email, please send the following information to [M.Merritt@charter.net](mailto:M.Merritt@charter.net) : your name, email address, postal address, and League name or MAL. Your information needs to go to this address, not the League office. Please let us know before January 1, 2008.

If you want to continue receiving your newsletter in your postal box, you don’t have to do anything.

## [Notes & Reminders](#)

**LWVUS 48<sup>th</sup> National Convention.** June 13-17, 2008, in Portland, Oregon, at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower.

**LWVMO Calendar 2007-2008.** Please note the following revisions and updates to our yearly calendar:

- Feb. 26 Candidate Filing
- May 30 Board Meeting
- May 31 LWVMO Council in Springfield
- June 13-17 National Convention
- Aug. 5 Primary Elections
- Nov. 4 Presidential Election Day

**Development.** Thanks to all who responded to the “donation” letter and made contributions to the LWVMO. If you had planned to make a contribution, but just hadn’t gotten around to it, now is a good time. You can donate to LWVMO or LWVMO Education Fund (tax deductible!). Please send your gifts to the League office and specify to which fund you wish to contribute.

**Gifts.** If you’re looking for the perfect gift for friends or family, we have the answer: a 2008 LWVMO Appointment Calendar. User friendly with plenty of space to plan your year, the calendars are \$5 each + shipping. Contact the League office to order your gifts today!

**Contact Your LWVMO Office.** We’re only an email or phone call away and always ready to help you: [lwvmo@yahoo.com](mailto:lwvmo@yahoo.com) or phone 314-961-6869. The mailing address is 8706 Manchester Road, Suite 104, St. Louis, MO 63144.

**Travel. 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](http://www.tcitravel.com). Plans can be made on the website by destination or travel dates.

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Peg Prendergast, Chyanne Lockhart Carderella, Joan Mills, and Marti Wheaton in the college's "art park."

## Calendar

### *Happy Holidays!*

- Dec. 24-31- LWVMO office closed
- Jan. 1- LWVMO office closed
- Jan. 5 (or 19) - LWVMO Board meeting in Columbia
- Jan. 20 - Voter info deadline
- Jan. 21 – Martin Luther King Holiday
- Feb. 5 – Presidential Primary
- Feb. 14 – LWV Birthday
- Feb. 18 – Presidents Day
- Feb. 26 – Candidate Filing