



Missouri Voter

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The League of Women Voters

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Missouri goes to National: Doris Buzzell, Janice Dahl, Peg Prendergast, Betty Ann Gilbert, Mary Merritt, Lois Detrick, Jo Sapp, Elaine Blodgett, Kathleen Farrell, and Judith Smart.

Reaching New Heights Together!

By Jo Sapp, LWVMO President

Missouri's delegation to 2008 LWV Convention in Portland was a strong one that included four Local League presidents. Working as a team, the delegation assured coverage of a large range of issues and ideas that will inform activities over the coming year. Even though Missouri's delegation was strong, it was not complete. While members of six of our eight leagues were at convention because of service to either the state or national league, only four of our local leagues sent official delegates, and not all of them sent all the delegates they were entitled to.

Important decisions that affect all of us are made at Convention and you'll find details of the day to day action at www.lwv.org. At convention we approve a budget and elect officers, of course, but we also set the PMP and establish priorities and learn about new tools like Smart Voter and Easy Web that can help us extend our reach while making our job easier.

At this year's convention we approved expanded efforts in health care and climate change and a study of the National Popular Vote compact. We also learned about improved techniques for expanding membership and retaining loyal members, for dealing with the press, for adding diversity to our mix, for

raising funds and developing the next crop of League leaders. Perhaps most usefully, we learned where to find the information we need to do our jobs better and who on the LWVUS staff can help us with resources and answers to our questions.

Missouri's statewide meetings are equally important to our organization's health and well being. Over the next year you'll be hearing about LWVMO's long-range planning process, especially if you plan to attend fall conference in Sedalia. These gatherings – National Convention, Fall Conference, and our own state Convention in the spring – are as much a part of LWV membership as unit meetings and candidate forums. Coming together face to face makes us stronger LWV members and it's on our strength, as individual members, as local leagues, as state leagues, that the future of this venerable organization that binds us together into one cohesive unit rests.

Views of Convention

A chance to mingle with smart, proactive Leaguers from throughout the country who have great ideas about building membership and projects that make a difference – that's what the national conference in Portland was all about! Every time you turned around there was a bright new idea to scribble down, another amazing perspective to consider on an issue of national or international scope. *Janice Dahl, St. Louis*

There was a swirl of agitation about the national Board's decision to change a convention rule to give National more control over how resolutions are handled. After much discussion and assorted motions, it was decided that the US Board would present a new proposal on the subject at the Council Meeting in 2009. Everyone talked about LWV being a **grass-roots organization**. For me, this was a compelling illustration of that concept. *Doris Buzzell, St. Louis*

Barbara Roberts, the first woman Governor of Oregon, presented **ideas for a revised presidential primary process** lasting just six months and creating better geographic and population balance and fairness. She also gave an excellent tip for a leader answering questions in an interview: put oneself in a position to answer. For instance, when asked an opinion on sales tax, she would preface her remarks with "as a former school board member and chair of the legislative budget process, I see the problems caused in our state in funding education with the

current unbalanced tax system." *Nancy Copenhaver, Moberly*



Jo Sapp and Doris Buzzell

Not being a voting delegate, I **saw the convention from a different perspective** this year. First, I was there as a member of the National Budget Committee and our priority was to get the budget passed. We had three Q & A sessions and apparently answered the questions satisfactorily, because the budget (including recommended PMP increases) passed with no changes. Second difference – it was the first time in several years I wasn't in charge of a Wares Table in the exhibit area, which made more time for other things. And, not being a voting delegate, I always had to sit in the back of the room. *Mary Merritt, Sedalia*

This year was my fifth LWVUS Convention. I also attended in 1970, 1972, 1974, and 2006. In the past I had always been a

LWV St. Louis delegate. This year I was a LWVMO delegate and needed to consider and cast my votes from a state-wide perspective. How different to **change mental gears!** Thank you so much for allowing me to represent Missouri. *Betty Ann Gilbert, St. Louis*

Inspiring! Two former Oregon governors spoke on the importance of good public debate regarding health care and the need for continued work to inform voters and advocate for important legislation. A former Colorado Supreme Court Justice told about her work to improve the national judicial system. Experts on climate change urged us to action. Important program items were approved after a healthy amount of well-reasoned and passionate debate. State and local leagues are fighting against voter registration restrictions, violations of sunshine laws, and poor election practices. They are informing citizens, educating young people about government, and advocating for legislative reforms. *Kathleen Farrell, St. Louis*



Kathleen Farrell, Janice Dahl, Betty Ann Gilbert, Judith Smart, and Doris Buzzell

The 2008 convention was a bit different from previous conventions. Many leagues and members seemed **more focused on the internal workings of LWVUS than on issues.** There were suggestions of changing half the board every year, at Convention and at council; more local control of national issues on the national level as in 'regardless of the subject and what LWVUS may be lobbying for, local leagues would like to pick and choose their important topics for federal government;' suggestions of remaking many of the bylaws and changing the powers of the board; plus the perennial 'move

the office from D.C'. *Elaine Blodgett, Columbia-Boone County*



Jo Sapp and Elaine Blodgett

Convention Adopts Climate Change Campaign

Local leagues can look forward to heightened activity on climate change in the coming months to reinforce LWVUS advocacy efforts. Stimulated by sobering facts from climate change panelists and an informational caucus led by LWVUS Climate Change Task Force (CCTF) members, convention delegates readily approved CCTF's proposal for a "multi-level education and advocacy campaign to promote solutions to global climate change". Leagues nationwide will be encouraged to pursue action strategies, such as adoption of local climate action plans, state Renewable Electricity Standards, or improved building energy codes. Watch for a web-based Climate Action Tool Kit and national list-serve to facilitate League action. *Reported by Win Colwill, LWVMO Energy-Co-Chair*

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It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to *things*.

Elinor Smith

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Spring Council Highlights

Mental Health in Missouri & Legislative Issues 2008

By Joan Mills, LWVMO Health Committee, and Charlotte King

Ed Duff, Policy Analyst and Outreach Specialist for the National Alliance on Mental Illness for Missouri, spoke at Spring Council. Mr. Duff, a graduate of UMKC, is a member of the Governor's Council on Disability. He has a bipolar illness.

Mr. Duff related that the state legislature first became concerned about mental illness when Gov. Reynolds committed suicide in 1846. Over 160 years later, this legislative session was dominated with the coming elections, and the Mental Health Department only received a 3% budget increase.

The Mental Health budget uses 5% for hospital care while 95% goes to Administrative Agents who contract mental health providers to work with "consumers." Of this total amount, one-third of the budget is for the Mentally Retarded & Developmentally Disabled.

It is estimated that 20% of the population has a mental illness of some kind; the most serious and persistent mentally ill are usually in jail. People with brain-based illnesses frequently die 20 years earlier than other persons. Many people have unrecognized brain-based illnesses.

In fact, one of the symptoms of mental illness is lack of insight – individuals do not realize they are ill. Once diagnosed, many patients are put on "step therapy" – given an older, cheaper, less-effective medication before they are allowed to use the more expensive medication. The consumer never regains the pre-illness, higher level of functioning.

The best hope for improvement in MH funding is to acquire parity on the federal level. Bills before congress – SB 558 & HB 1424 – can help achieve that parity.

Rachel Farr Fitch Award

By Lael Von Holt, LWVMO Health Chair

The Rachel Farr Fitch Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health Care Action or Program was presented at the 2008 LWVMO State Council to Isabel's House, Crisis Nursery of the Ozarks, in Springfield. LWV SWMO offered this nomination.

Rachel Farr Fitch personally presented the award, and Heather Trinca, President of the Junior League, accepted it on behalf of Isabel's House, the Junior League's signature project for children in crisis.

Previous recipients of this award include: Rachel Farr Fitch, PhD. for outstanding achievement in health care (2002), Pettis County Rotary Club International for the eradication of polio program (2004), and the Stowers Institute of Kansas City for biomedical research (2006).



Lael Von Holt, Heather Trinca (accepting the award on behalf of Isabel's House), and Rachel Farr Fitch

Public Advocacy for Voter Protection

By Mary Merritt, LWVMO Board Director

LWVMO has received a grant to work on the Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) project to:

- Oppose ID and Documentary Proof of Citizenship
- Improve Administration of Statewide Voter Database Systems
- Guard Against Undue Restrictions on Voter Registration
- Improve Polling Place Management
- Improve Poll Worker Training and Strengthening Poll Workers

The project has already enabled us to work with a coalition and defeat the Voter ID bill in the just finished legislative session and to begin to explore election issues, including election administration and voter registration databases.

At a meeting with high-level members of the Secretary of State's office we discussed their responsibilities in the establishment and maintenance of the database and their relationship with local election officials. We also discussed the need for more poll workers, especially those with some technological knowledge/experience. The SOS offers a variety of resources to aid poll worker recruitment and training efforts, and the League can be helpful in distributing this information.

As the project proceeds, we plan face-to-face visits with local election officials across the state, beginning with the locations where we have local leagues – you will be hearing from us about a visit to your area.

MO HealthNet Survey

By Lael Von Holt, LWVMO Health Chair

Thanks to all members who participated in the MO HealthNet Survey and who expressed interest in it. Since 2005, League has followed the front-burner issue of Medicaid Reform and the resulting public health care plan now called MO HealthNet, which has been in effect since August 2007.

The impact of MO HealthNet was the central question of this survey. Presidents in all Local Leagues were provided with directions and sample questions to assist members interviewing their county professionals in health and family service offices.

Results of this informal survey showed lingering frustration in the counties, with comments such as: 1) Nothing's changed; 2) MO HealthNet seems to have fallen by the wayside; 3) People seem unaware of the new health care model. On the more positive side, we heard about county coalitions providing health care to those denied Medicaid and, from family services, that no one is turned away without service or referral of some kind.

One conclusion that stands out is the striking disconnect, particularly in certain sectors, between the players in Jefferson City – the legislators, lobbyists, directors, and media – and the county professionals sitting across the desk from a client, trying to understand MO HealthNet and accommodate that client in need. This disconnect will guide LWVMO in any action we take.

Micki Hoffman, LWVMO's & LWVSTL's Office Manager, Resigns

By Doris Buzzell, LWV St. Louis President, and Jo Sapp, LWVMO President

After six years of service to the state and local Leagues, Micki Hoffman has resigned to pursue her career as Director of Adult Education and Literacy at East Central College in Union. We thank Micki for her many contributions to LWV over the years and are excited to tell you that she remains a member of LWV STL! We wish her well in this wonderful new endeavor!

Brenda Banjak, a long-time member and former office manager, has agreed to fill in temporarily, for which we are most grateful. We advertised the position of Executive Director and were delighted by the response from many highly-qualified applicants. We are in the process of interviewing and trying to determine who will best help us meet our Leagues' vision for the future as well as the needs of today. (Full job description at www.lwvstl.org or www.lwvmissouri.org.)

Calendar

2008

August 5 – **Vote!** Primary Election
August 9 – LWVMO Board and Local League Officers/Board Roundtable in Columbia
September 20 – *MissouriVoter* copy deadline for September/October issue
October 8 – Last day to register to vote in the General Election
October 24 – LWVMO Board meets in Sedalia
October 25 – LWV Fall Conference in Sedalia
November 4 – **Vote!** General Election
December ? – Legislative Planning

2009

January ? – Schedule Lobby Day
January 10 – LWVMO Board meets in Columbia
January 24 – Alternate snow date for LWVMO Board meeting in Columbia
March 7 – LWVMO Board meets in St. Louis; social event from 3-6 p.m. with St. Louis League
April 24 – LWVMO Board meets in Jefferson City
April 25/26 – LWV State Convention
May 1/2/3 – Alternate dates for State Convention

[Notes & Reminders](#)



Tuesday, August 5, Primary Election, polls open 6 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Encourage people to register by October 8 to vote in the General Election.

Tuesday, November 4, General Election, polls open 6 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Election Supplies Available from LWVMO Office. Contact the League office (314-961-6869 or lwvmo@yahoo.com) to order any or all of these Election posters, handbills, and cards and have them on display and available at all League functions, especially candidate forums:

- ✓ *Be A Poll Worker* poster (approx. 11 x 17)
- ✓ *It's Your Turn to Be a Poll Worker* handbill
- ✓ *5 Things You Need to Know on Election Day* card
- ✓ *Smart Voter* bookmarks

Membership Recruitment. Jo Sapp, LWVMO President, suggests that as you plan for forums this fall remember to include membership messaging from the podium. “LWV where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.” Then follow up by passing out membership applications. These two actions have proven to be the most effective recruitment tools we have.

Statewide Leadership Training Opportunity. Please join the LWVMO Board on Saturday, August 9, in the Friends' Room of the Columbia Public Library, 100 W. Broadway, for a state board meeting at 9:30 a.m. followed by a Leaders' Roundtable beginning with lunch (provided by the state board) at 12:15 p.m.

Experienced LWV members will be on hand to share ideas about membership recruitment efforts, ed fund procedures, and leader development. The session also will offer specific operation information and advocacy resources for those members of your board who follow issues. Best of all, we'll have an opportunity to get acquainted and find ways to work together.

Please contact Maydell Senn at msenn01@tranquility.net by August 5 and let her know how many members of your board plan to attend and for which portion(s) of the day. Looking forward to seeing you August 9!

2009 Calendars. It's never too early to plan your League activities. The 2009 Calendars (our big money-making project) are printed and ready for purchase. Please call the LWVMO office at 314-961-6869 or email lwvmo@yahoo.com to order yours today!

Emailed Voter. Want to see your *MissouriVoter* in your inbox, in color? Just notify the office – lwvmo@yahoo.com and tell them you want to be on the information super highway.

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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