



# Missouri Voter

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The League of Women Voters

May/June 2010

## LWVMO Celebrates 90 Years!

*By Sydell Shayer, St. Louis LWV and LWVMO off-board*

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, League members from all over Missouri trekked to St. Louis for the sole purpose of celebrating the League of Women Voters on its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. And what a celebration it was! Those attending reflected our membership: they came from small towns and big cities, from small and large Leagues, and have been members from as little as one year to over fifty!

The common thread among us is our strong commitment to the principles and purposes of the League. Each of us has a preferred aspect of the League, the one we spend most of our League time doing. But all of us believe that the League provides the most complete voter service to the community, at election time and throughout the year, and we believe that the issues we study and advocate on make a difference to the entire community.

Lael Von Holt of Columbia received the Rachel Farr Fitch Health Award. We also presented historical awards to eight members for their work in their local Leagues. (More on these awards in the following article.)

The program, *Women: Then, Now and Tomorrow* featured Vivian Eveloff from the Sue Shear Institute and Jo Manniess from the St. Louis Beacon. They noted that we have come a long way from gaining the right to vote. Now we help register and educate voters, study and advocate on important issues. The next step is to encourage more women to seek public office on the local, state, and national levels.

Although the 90<sup>th</sup> Celebration had these serious, thought-provoking moments, the moment I enjoyed most was when the League attendees were asked to characterize themselves by age. When we got to those members over 90 years, several members stood. One member said, "I'm 92," another yelled out, "I'm 93," and one more voice called out, "I'm 94." Being the oldest or almost the oldest was indeed a mark of distinction. This was followed by determining the youngest attendee with two 22-year-olds tying. Both the oldest and youngest received gifts.

I have a ways to go before I reach 90, but I have been a member for 53 years. The League has influenced my life in ways that even I cannot fathom. I know I would be a different person if I had not accumulated the knowledge I gained through the League, the opportunity to serve, the friends I have made, and the fun I have had.

I look forward to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the League and what we as an organization will accomplish in the interim. And to those who were not able to make it this time, I will see you 10 years from now, if not before.



Linda Kaiser, Columbia/BC President, and  
Lois Detrick, LWVMO President



Celebrators from Columbia/BC: Dick Parker,  
Rachel & Wayne Brekhus

## *Awards Presented At 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration*

### *Lael Von Holt Receives Health Care Award*



Lael Von Holt accepts award as Rachel Farr Fitch, Mary Merritt, and Lois Detrick look on.

Lael Von Holt received the 2010 Rachel Farr Fitch Award for Excellence in Health Care for her dedication to improving mental health services and the management of autism in children through legislative action and education of the public.

With a BA in Clinical Psychology and a Masters in Clinical Social Work, Lael has used her talents and training for over 40 years, as both a therapist and clinical social worker, to help those with mental illness. Lael keeps her professional licensure current. She has served on the Boone County Mental Health Board of Trustees and continues as an Observer.

Lael joined LWV in 1979 and has served her local League (Columbia/BC) in many capacities since that time. She was elected to the state board in 1995 where she has worked tirelessly as Mental Health/Health Director.

The Rachel Farr Fitch Award, established in 2002, is presented every two years to an individual or organization that has been a champion in the health care field. Thank you, Lael, for being one of those champions!

### *90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Historical Award*

In honor of the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters in St. Louis (1920), the State Board created the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Historical Award whereby local Leagues would each choose an outstanding member in the history of their League. The following members received the award at our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration:

**Liz Schmidt, Columbia/Boone County.** Liz joined the League in the 1950s and in the ensuing years has developed a history of outstanding service to the League and the community. Her activities have included the Observer Corps, the LWV board, two terms as president plus a variety of offices and portfolios, currently as co-chair of the Membership Committee. Liz's service to Columbia has included membership on the Planning & Zoning Board, Board of Adjustment, Energy & Environment Commission, and Fair Housing.

**Margie Richcreek, Kansas City/Jackson, Clay & Platte Counties.** Margie has been a member of LWV since 1969. She has served on her local board with a variety of portfolios, plus four terms as president. As president of the Kansas City LWV in 2003-2004, she worked through merger negotiations with the LWV of Eastern Jackson County to form the current Kansas City/JCP LWV. Margie works with youth through the "Voter Power and Responsibility" project and the Park Hill Community Drug Taskforce. She recently chaired the Regional Transit Alliance which supports creating a quality public transit system for the Kansas City area.



Margie Richcreek and Lois Detrick

**Elizabeth Vaughn, Mexico/Audrain County.** During her 40+ years as a League member, Betty served as president several times and worked as Voter Service Chair. She was a strong advocate for voter education, and, in the 1970s, helped bring candidate and issue forums to Mexico voters via cable TV. A member of the Planning & Zoning Commission for more than 30 years, she participated in Mexico's economic expansion, including the annexation and development of the city's first industrial park. She served on the LWVMO state board and was instrumental in revising and updating Missouri's election laws in the 1960s, working with the

University's election laws expert Prof. Robert Karsch. Betty died in 2004. Her daughter, Eleanor Farnen, accepted the award.

**Marilyn Tatlow, Moberly/Randolph County.** Marilyn was one of several women who felt their area needed an organization to bring together people interested in local, state, and national politics. They decided LWV would fill the bill. A major emphasis at that time was the Sunshine Law. Because the Moberly City Council was not observing that law to the citizens' satisfaction, the League "hounded" the council into enforcing it. This led to the League's implementation of the Observer Corps in which members volunteered to attend various board meetings as well as significant committee meetings. Marilyn's drive and strength was a major force in making the Moberly/RC League what is it today. Marilyn died three years ago. Her son, Phil, accepted the award.

**Myrna Ragar, Sedalia/Pettis County.** Artist is the first word that comes to mind when one hears the name Myrna Ragar. In addition to running her business, Ragar Banners by Design, Myrna shares her talents with many groups, including LWV. She designed the suffragist, flapper and capitol woman pins. This year she designed the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo that was adopted by the LWVUS Board as the official 90<sup>th</sup> logo. Not only did she design the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary merchandise LWVMO is selling, but through her business is able to buy at discounted prices and pass that savings on to the League. Myrna's other recent contributions include the 90<sup>th</sup> Celebration invitations and the covers of the Quilt Booklet and the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary program.



Mary Merritt and Myrna Ragar

**Nelda Steffen, Southeast Missouri.** Nelda joined the League in 1970, and it was a perfect match with her natural interest and concern for people and her community. She has taken her fascination with the political process and, particularly, the election process to schools, churches, universities, naturalization ceremonies, and other public gatherings to help inform citizens about voting. Nelda has served on her local board without a break for 40 years. She helped establish a website for educating the SEMO community. She also has served two terms on the state board and is currently a member of the LWVMO nominating committee.

**Ilga Vise, Southwest Missouri.** In 1945, at the age of 10, Ilga left Latvia with her parents and siblings. For three months, they walked from East Poland to West Germany where they lived the next five years in a refugee camp. At age 17, Ilga came to the U.S., attended college, and became a teacher. Because she had lived in countries where citizens had no choices in who represented them, she has worked tirelessly to help people become informed. She has served her League as president, organized candidate forums that were broadcast on local cable TV, and established the League's presence at naturalization ceremonies. Each year Ilga speaks to the new citizens, and LWV volunteers provide voter registration the same day.



Ilga Vise and Lois Detrick

**Janet Becker, St. Louis.** Janet has been a committed League member for 50+ years. She served as president of the University City League and of the coordinating board for the six separate St. Louis area Leagues. It was her idea to form the educational Citizen Information Resource Center, a tax-deductible organization. She has worked on many issues, but housing for the low-income population, inter-racial relations, and interfaith partnerships are her passions. She followed League's mission to become politically active when she became a full-time volunteer in Senator Harriet Woods' office and worked to get her elected to statewide positions. There is a little of Janet in almost everything League.

## *The Rhythm of League*

*By Lois Detrick, LWVMO President*

By the time you get this issue of the Missouri Voter, your annual meetings will probably have taken place, new officers will be starting work, plans will be getting made for the coming year, the legislative sessions will have ended, and some members will be getting ready to go to National convention. That's the rhythm of the League.

Your League is never quiet and never rests. Representatives from each League will be gathering in Columbia to see what the membership thrust will be for the coming year. The state board is having an extra meeting to look closer at some of the urgent issues our state legislators will be dealing with during the next session.

Those who were able to attend our state 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration still feel the exuberant atmosphere from such a thrilling event. Mary Merritt and her committee deserve our heartiest thanks for such a joyous and well planned affair!

As we move into the 2010-2011 year, I want to applaud everyone who has worked this year to help make democracy work. It doesn't matter whether the work was done locally or at the state or national level. It is all a worthwhile job, well done!

I'll see you at Fall Conference!

## *LWV National Convention*

*By Sydell Shayer, LWVMO off-board*

League members from all over the United States will converge in Atlanta for the 49<sup>th</sup> National Convention on June 11-15. In addition to our contingent of delegates from local Leagues and state board, we have two members with special status: Elaine Blodgett, Columbia/BC LWV, is the nominee for chair of the national nominating committee, and Linda McDaniel, St. Louis LWV, is responsible for organizing the candidate forum so delegates can meet the candidates for the national board, proposed and floor nominated.

Convention delegates will choose a new national board, approve a budget, amend the bylaws, and select program for the next two years. The proposed program is a study of the "Federal Role in Public Education." In addition, the national board is proposing a convention-floor concurrence to amend and update the Arms Control position.

There are three not-recommended items for concurrence with positions that some Leagues already have. They are Marriage Equality, National Popular Vote, and Financial Institutions. A study on a Department of Peace, proposed by our Columbia/BC League, is one of 32 not-recommended items which could be brought up for consideration at the convention.

## *90! Big Number, Build Excitement!*

*By Elaine Blodgett, LWVMO MRI Director, and Charlotte King, Missouri Voter Editor*

This is a good time to take inventory of your League in a casual, relaxed manner, involving as many members as possible. Discuss what you did this year, particularly projects and outreach activities that brought new members and created interest within your community. Then, building on that success, make plans for the coming year:

- The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of LWVUS and LWVMO is a great time to let your town and county know why we are in the community. Can you come up with a list of 90 reasons for elections or 90 reasons the League is needed in the community? Send your list to the office, and we'll publish it in the *Missouri Voter*.
- With the upcoming August and November elections, this is the perfect opportunity to provide candidate and issue information, distribute handouts on registering to vote, appear on radio and TV and in newspapers and newsletters with brief announcements and information about the elections. Small venues or large stations and newspapers are all important.
- Plan programs about community topics or current issues, like surviving the economic crisis, or have a discussion on the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment or the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Show *Iron Jawed Angels*. (Here is a link to film copyright rules: [http://www.ehow.com/list\\_6417401\\_film-copyright-rules.html](http://www.ehow.com/list_6417401_film-copyright-rules.html)) Celebrate Constitution Day, Sept. 17.
- Share your successes and ideas with other local Leagues.

## *Missouri's Nonpartisan Court Plan Threatened*

*By Linda Kaiser, Columbia/BC LWV President*

In 1940, after a two-year study, LWVMO decided to support the Nonpartisan Court Plan for selecting judges. Since then, with League help and support, St. Louis County joined that system in 1970, Cass, Clay, and Platte Counties in 1972, and Green County in 2008. This plan is now threatened, and its repeal will likely be on the November ballot (signature verification is now underway on the initiative petition). It is imperative that all Leagues work to inform and educate voters of the value of an independent judiciary and the importance of the Missouri Plan in achieving that objective.

As part of the effort, LWVMO has agreed to partner with the Missouri Bar Association in speaking to civic groups throughout the state. Local Leagues have been asked to identify representatives to coordinate speakers in their respective areas (to date only three have responded). If you are willing to serve in this capacity for your League, please let your local President know. (Information has already been provided to them for use in this effort.)

The state board will be meeting in late June to develop specific strategies in this effort. If you have any suggestions or ideas, please send them to Linda Kaiser ([lindaskaiser@gmail.com](mailto:lindaskaiser@gmail.com)), who will be compiling them for the state board's consideration.

### *Local Leagues*

#### Local League Presidents for 2010-2011

Columbia/BC – Linda Kaiser  
 Kansas City/JCP – Peg Prendergast  
 Mexico/AC – Laura Worstell and Anna Mayson  
 Moberly/RC – Jerry Osborne  
 Sedalia/PC – Mary Merritt  
 SEMO – Sue Brockett  
 SWMO – Cindy Stephens  
 St. Louis – Linda McDaniel and Becky Clausen

#### SWMO LWV (from Ann Elwell and Cindy Stephens)

Encouraging women to take the leap into public service was the goal of a unique workshop called *Women Leaders: Making Democracy Work*. Inspired by last year's *Women Changing Government* luncheon, this workshop was designed as a "pipeline" to public service. "Women feel strongly about their communities and want to help make a difference," Leslie Carrier, Voter Service Chairman, explained. "This program illustrated how women can participate in public policymaking and really make an impact." Look for more information in the next *Missouri Voter*.

#### Columbia-Boone County LWV (from Linda Kaiser, President)

Our League extends congratulations to Lael Von Holt, a longtime member active in mental health issues, for winning the Rachel Farr Fitch Award this year. At our annual meeting in April, we elected new officers and recognized our most recent 50-year League Member – Pat Williamson. The new board has met and is well along in the process of developing the activities schedule for 2010-11, as well as taking new steps in recruiting and retaining members.

## *In Brief*

**Legislation.** The Missouri Legislature wrapped up this session on May 14, but sorting through what passed and what didn't may take a bit of time. Watch for a legislative wrap-up edition of the *Legislative Bulletin* toward the end of May. By then some legislation may have been signed by the Governor, but some may take more study and scrutiny by the executive office before action is final. (from Nancy Copenhaver, Legislative Director)

**LWVMO Board.** Linda Vogel (KC/JCP), Health Director, submitted her resignation, and the board accepted it with regret.

**Gifts.** Thanks to the following individuals for their thoughtful contributions to our League:

LWVMO -

Jo Sapp

Mary Merritt in memory of Doris Campbell

LWVMO Ed Fund -

Brucie Tuttle

**Touching Lives.** "When I was little, my mother would drag me and my little brother to League of Women Voters Candidate Forums and Voter Registration Drives, so I suppose that's where I first got my interest in politics and the political process." ~ Robert Gibbs, press secretary for President Obama.

**Emailed *Missouri Voter*.** Would you like to see the *Missouri Voter* in color? Save LWVMO printing and mailing costs? You can get the *Missouri Voter* direct to your computer by contacting Anna or Julie at the office. Let them know the email address at which you would like to receive your *Missouri Voter*. Your email address is not shared with any person or company, and your newsletter will be sent bcc.

**LWVMO Online Store.** We have wonderful League items available at our Online Store – 90<sup>th</sup> Celebration (limited supply) mugs, lapel pins, stickers; Missouri Voters' Handbook; pins and notes cards. Take a look and order something special today! We accept PayPal!

### Quilts.



Suffragist Donna Hoch (KC/JCP LWV) poses by the Missouri Quilt at our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. Carolyn Nolan of St. Louis won this one-of-a-kind quilt which represents famous women of the suffrage movement. Tickets are still available for the National Quilt, which is similar, but not identical, to the above

quilt. For information on these tickets, please visit our website, contact the office, or email [m.merritt@charter.net](mailto:m.merritt@charter.net). The National Quilt will be given away at LWVUS Convention in Atlanta, June 11-15, so our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Chair Mary Merritt must have all tickets for the raffle by June 9.

### Contact Your LWVMO:

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Website: [www.lwvmissouri.org](http://www.lwvmissouri.org)

### 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gifts

Thank you to the following League members and friends for their thoughtful donations to the LWVMO General Fund or the LWVMO Education Fund:

- Elaine Blodgett
- Rachel Brekhus
- Maydell Senn
- Linda McDaniel
- Sydell Shayer
- Betty Ann Gilbert
- Lois Detrick
- Cande Iveson
- Win Colwill
- Judith Smart
- Margaret Weck
- Joan Botwinick
- Susan Fluegel
- Lois Bliss
- Mary McManus
- Karen McCullough
- Mary Ellen Brucker
- Joni O'Connor
- K. Wentzien
- Carol Griesemer
- Lori Calcaterra
- Becky Clausen
- Marjorie Wilson
- Carol Bachhuber
- Kathleen Farrell
- Carol Portman
- Sue Dellbringge
- Jean Morrel-Franklin
- Jo Sapp
- Martha Ott
- Cindy Mitchell
- Ada Cruce
- Marjorie Reinhart
- Nancy Miller
- Margaret Wheaton
- Ann Elwell
- Katharine Kilpatric
- Cindy Stephens
- Doris Flowers
- Patricia Farrior
- Connie Asbury

- Annette Heller
- Linda Shaw
- Gary Thomas
- Elizabeth McDaniel
- Rachel Farr Fitch
- Lucille Salerno
- Judy Koepke
- Elizabeth Schmidt
- Lillian Goldman
- Tom Newcomb
- Pat Rich

### Missouri's First Woman Voter

In honor of our 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Secretary of State's Office sent this photo of Marie Byrum, the first woman in Missouri to vote. We also received a copy of the page bearing her signature (on the top line!) when she cast her ballot in Hannibal on August 31, 1920.



### 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pics



Lois Detrick and Nelda Steffen, taken when Nelda received the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Historical Award



Shopping



Carol Portman and friends



Maydell Senn and Joan Mills

**Calendar**

May	Mental Health Month
May 31	Memorial Day (office closed)
June 11-15	LWVUS Convention – Atlanta
June 14	Flag Day
June 26	LWVMO BOD Issues Meeting 10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. in Columbia
July 4	Independence Day
July 5	Office closed
July 16	LWVMO BOD Retreat

***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 \$100, which will be split 50/50 between LWVMO and the local League. You can call them at 1-800-762-4216 or navigate their website at [www.SeriousTraveler.com](http://www.SeriousTraveler.com). Plans can be made on the website by destination or travel dates.

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