



Missouri Voter

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The League of Women Voters

November/December 2009

Fall

Conference

2009



*LWVMO members from all eight local Leagues get acquainted.
(All photos in this issue were taken Fall Conference weekend, 2009.)*

Saturday Evening, November 14, 2009, wishing you had been there . . .

By Sydell Shayer, 50+ years LWV member, St. Louis LWV

I just returned from Sedalia, a three-hour drive from St. Louis, where I, and five other members of the St. Louis League, attended the LWVMO Fall Conference. It was a wonderful experience, and I wish that each League member could have been there. Over 50 members, representing Missouri's eight local Leagues, assembled for a day of learning, sharing, and camaraderie.

Over half the attendees had never attended a state meeting before. However, each person displayed enthusiasm for the League and was eager to share successes and get new ideas to try out. What is so amazing to me is that some Missouri Leagues have very small memberships, yet they do so much. Being in a small community gives them much more visibility for the same kinds of activities we do in St. Louis.

The keynote speaker was Janis McMillen, chair of the LWVUS Task Force on Health Care. There also were give-and-take sessions on membership recruitment, early voting, state League activities, CapWiz, and development.

Believe it or not, the development report was one of the most fun portions of the day. It was centered on the League's 90th Anniversary in 2010. Save Saturday, April 24, for the big celebration here in St. Louis. Some of you have purchased the new League mugs with the 90th logo. We also have lapel pins and stickers. But the most exciting fund-raising activity is the quilt raffles.

League members and friends made two beautiful quilts commemorating outstanding women in the fight for women's rights. The quilts are being raffled, with one winner at the 90th Anniversary event and the other at the LWVUS convention next June.

But the really exciting part of the development activity, which permeated the whole day, was a series of spontaneous financial donations to LWVMO which also bought a "seat at the table" – a ticket to the 90th Anniversary

luncheon. Let me explain. Knowing the state League's urgent need for funds, during the 90th Anniversary presentation a member quietly wrote a check for \$90 and gave it to Anna Mennerick, our Executive Director. Anna took the opportunity to interrupt the meeting, stand up, and yell out, "Mary! Mary! We just received \$90 from Betty Ann Gilbert (St. Louis LWV), and she now has a seat at the table." That started the ball rolling! During the day, every once in awhile, Anna would stand up and interrupt the meeting with another announcement of a \$90 donation. We hope many more members will follow suit with a \$90 check which will admit you to the luncheon (cost \$40), and the rest will help LWVMO.

I could go on and on with all the LWVMO activities, but you will find that out in this *Missouri Voter* and on our website. Enjoy our products, help fill the state coffers, be glad your League had attendees at Fall Conference, and plan to attend next year!

Health Care Reform - Dead, Surviving, or Healthy?

By Lael Von Holt, LWVMO Health/Mental Health Director

We were fortunate to have Janis McMillen, Ph.D., as our keynote speaker at Fall Conference. Janis, our LWVUS liaison and the Chair of the LWVUS Health Education Project, brought her extensive experience in the fields of health, education, and justice to the topic of *Health Care Reform – Dead, Surviving, or Healthy?*

Janis began her talk with a statement of the key components of the LWVUS position on Health Care Reform, including: All U.S. residents will have access to a basic level of quality health care that is affordable for everyone.

In 2008, 47 million people were without coverage. It is projected that by 2010, there will be 50 million. Even though 16% of our economy is spent on health care, residents of rural areas and minority population areas are less likely to have access to either physical or mental health care. In 2008, two-thirds of bankruptcy filings were because of medical bills. In the meantime, cost drivers for health care continue to include insurance premium increases, administrative overhead, and fragmentation of care.

The latest legislation (HR 3962), recently passed in the House of Representatives, is a public-option plan covering about 96% of Americans. League agrees with most of this plan, but with reservations in a couple of areas, such as the restrictive abortion provision.

Recently, a Senate amendment on health care reform received the necessary 60 votes to proceed with full debate on the Senate floor. This particular public-option plan includes a modification of the abortion restriction and an opt-out provision. Many other issues remain controversial, and the debate is expected to be intense.

LWVUS will be engaged, as always, and will keep us posted on Congressional action. Information is available on the national website, www.lwv.org.

Our sincere thanks to Janis McMillen for her excellent presentation of education and guidance. However, she has left it up to us to answer the title question: *Health Care Reform – Dead, Surviving, or Healthy?*



Keynote speaker Janis McMillen, LWVUS Health Education Project Chair, and Lael Von Holt, LWVMO Health/Mental Health Director



Nelda Steffen (SWMO LWV) displaying one of the blocks she made for the Missouri quilt.



LWV 90th Anniversary

By Mary Merritt, LWVMO 90th Anniversary Chair

The completed **Missouri Quilt** was shown to League members at Fall Conference. A photo of the quilt will soon be on our website. Raffle tickets were distributed to local Leagues at Fall Conference; please consult your local League president for more information. The **National Quilt** will be unveiled at our 90th Anniversary party.

Each quilt block honors a woman who was important in the long struggle for women's rights. A booklet of these women's biographies is in works and should be completed soon. We will give one to each quilt winner and to each person who made a quilt block. Additional copies will be available for a small fee.

The **90th lapel pins** are here. Missouri local Leagues can buy them for \$5 each. For other Leagues and individuals, the price is \$10, so get your pin from your local League.

We are planning a **90th Anniversary Memory Book** with stories from local Leagues, a list honoring 50-year members, etc., to give to each person attending the April 24th luncheon. To pay for the printing, we will be selling "ads" – local League presidents will soon have information on this. Questions about stories should be directed to Peg Prendergast and /or Joan Mills; advertising questions to Mary Merritt. You may contact them at the LWVMO office.

\$90 for the 90th – a \$90 contribution to LWVMO now will include your \$40 ticket for the anniversary luncheon on April 24th.

Please continue checking our website for updated information on the 90th Anniversary plans.

MRI- NOT High Resonance Imaging

By Elaine Blodgett, LWVMO MRI Chair

This past year LWVUS chose several states to participate in a project known as MRI or Membership Recruitment Initiative. Linda Kaiser (Columbia/BC), Peg Prendergast (KC/JCP), and I volunteered to lead the project in Missouri. With help, advice and some nudging from LWVUS, we have put our efforts into talking with and offering assistance to all local Leagues in Missouri.

As a result, our Leagues are gaining members, but we can do better. We need to reach out with more informational meetings for the public and increase our activity in getting PR out to all media.

With membership and national legislation as its prime activities, LWVUS has put effort into building up a strong membership base. Ultimately, it's up to LWVMO to help our local Leagues, and it's up to all of us to make our organization active and vital in our communities and to ask others to join us.

Just as LWVUS helped Missouri get started with MRI, we are always available to help, advise, and nudge you. Please contact Linda, Peg, or me at the LWVMO office.

The 90th Anniversary of LWV will be in 2010. Join us in our celebration and invite new members to celebrate with us!

CapWiz – An Advocacy Tool

By Cande Iveson and Charlotte King, LWVMO Directors

In the book *Bowling Alone* by Robert Putnam, the author examines the overall decline of our individual connections to and engagement with the broader society. For example, people spend more time using computers than visiting with friends. Or they visit with friends via the computer. To keep up with these cultural changes, stay in touch with our members, and attract new members, LWVMO must use the tools technology offers. One we have chosen is **CapWiz**, which can

- help better identifying potential members and advocates
- help make our information stand out, if we target our messages
- get our messages out quickly

CapWiz includes data about elected officials, as well as data about our subscribers. Subscribers receive emails from LWVMO about important issues, most often those that require some action (e.g., Action Alerts). These emails go to

subscribers most likely to act by contacting their elected officials. This targeted communication ensures that the officials responsible get a consistent and focused message from advocates.

Our list of subscribers currently includes 308 active (paid) League members, 244 inactive (past) League members, and 580 non-League members.

We can provide local Leagues with lists of current CapWiz subscribers in their area. Leagues should make sure their current members are on the list. They also should try to recruit members from those on the list who are not League members. Finally, Leagues wishing to add their local officials to CapWiz can use the system to make contact on local issues.

For more information about CapWiz or to be added to the subscriber list, contact Cande at the League office.

[Early Voting Update](#)

By Cheryl Barnes and Donna Hoch, Early Voting Study Co-Chairs

The Kansas City educational panel on early voting (held Oct. 10) included:

- Emily Allen, Manager of Publications and Communications, International Assoc. of Administrative Professionals (employees)
- Paul LeVota, Missouri House of Representatives, District 52, co-sponsor, H.B. 49 which would allow voters to cast an advance ballot
- Peggy McGaugh, President of the Missouri Assoc. of Counties, Treasurer of the County Clerk Assoc. and Carroll County Clerk (rural implementation)
- Shelley McThomas, Director of the Kansas City Election Board (urban implementation)
- Connie Schmidt, former Johnson County (Kans.) Election Commissioner and national election expert.

A DVD of the informative presentation was distributed to Leagues at the Fall Conference.

The Mexico League produced an excellent PowerPoint presentation for their educational meeting and Kansas City, taking a page from their book, also produced one for their consensus meeting. The Kansas City PowerPoint will be available on the Google site along with other study materials. <http://groups.google.com/group/lwvmo-early-voting-study?hl=en>

The committee felt it was important to hear from the county clerks and election officials, as they are responsible for elections. 42 survey responses were received from across the state, which vary from support to one clerk who typed in NO! NO! NO! Their responses include a recommendation for flexibility and local implementation. The hard-copy print out was provided to each local LWV.

Once the consensus meetings are completed, local LWVs will forward their report to the State office, which will share the material with Donna Hoch and Cheryl Barnes, co-chairs, who are responsible for compiling a report for the LWVMO Board who will determine the League's position.

The purpose of the study is to determine if early voting and/or no-excuse absentee voting would remove barriers to voting and maximize the opportunity to vote. We currently support an accurate, accountable, accessible, efficient, re-countable, and uniform election process.



*Carol Griesemer, MAL, Joplin, and
Lois Detrick, LWVMO President*

[“Lobby Day”](#)

By Lois Detrick, LWVMO President

I was honored to be asked by National to come to Washington D.C. to lobby our senators on behalf of the Climate Change bill. Along with seven other state LWV presidents, we met with Oxfam personnel and others for "lobby day."

Oxfam began during World War II as a relief organization to countries affected by the war. Since then, Oxfam (originally Oxford Family Relief Organization) has become a worldwide group that seeks to help people, especially in developing countries, by teaching them to use local resources to help themselves. Oxfam does

outstanding work, and LWV made a good decision when we chose to work with them.

From the D.C. experience, I learned that most people do not begin to realize the true meaning of Climate Change. It is more than melting glaciers and polar bears! For example, when glaciers melt, that permafrost decays and sends more CO2 into the atmosphere. Oceans that had been cold are warming, and the sediments are decaying, sending methane into the atmosphere – this is about 2-1/2 times worse than carbon dioxide, thus intensifying what humans have already done. When nature responds to these changing conditions, the problem is soon out of our hands, and we can't turn things back.

England changed their coal plants into natural gas, reducing emission rates 14% since 1990. President Obama and China's leaders agree there needs to be more done to create "cleaner" coal technology. How fast can we do this? Do we implement measures that will probably raise our utility bills? What does this mean to our legislators from coal states, such as Missouri, who would like to do "the right thing," but at the risk of people not understanding the issues and not re-electing them?

Make yourself more knowledgeable about Climate Change. Conserve energy. The future of this planet is truly in our hands!

Environment – “Sisters”

By Sue Brockett, LWVMO Environment Director

Activity in the past two months has centered around the Climate Change Grant to LWVMO from LWVUS and Oxfam. Oxfam believes climate change will result in dire human consequences and has rated this a top priority for 2009-2010. The people of poorer, underdeveloped regions need economic help to deal with the effects of climate change. The aim of the grant is to add our voices to Oxfam for climate change legislation. We are one of four states to receive this grant.

Local Leagues in Kansas City and Columbia held successful events featuring the "Sisters of the Planet" DVD produced by Oxfam. SEMO and St. Louis have planned events for December.

Successful efforts to engage Senator Claire McCaskill in the climate change debate were accomplished when Nancy Bowser and Linda McDaniel met with staff at Senator McCaskill's office in St. Louis, and Lois Detrick visited Washington, D.C.

We are still trying to identify women who are Missouri "grasstops" and who might be willing to become 'Sister Ambassadors.' If you have someone you would like to recommend, please let me know.

Thanks to everyone for their efforts on the climate change front.

Renewable Power Offers a Brighter Future

By Win Colwill, LWVMO Energy Director

Coal-fired power plants supply 83% of Missouri's electricity. They are the state's largest source of global warming carbon dioxide emissions; every kilowatt-hour produced releases two pounds of CO2 into the atmosphere. We can reduce harmful emissions and create new jobs by making energy efficiency improvements and switching to renewable sources to generate electricity.

Wind power is Missouri's fastest growing, most cost-competitive clean power source. Lost Creek wind farm, now under construction, is Missouri's fourth and largest utility-scale wind project. Electricity generated by the 100 1.5 megawatt turbines will feed into Associated Electric Cooperatives power lines, joining production from projects already online. With a combined capacity of 300 megawatts, these projects bring a welcome infusion of new jobs and revenue to northwestern communities and provide a new "cash crop" for farmers.

Missouri has good solar resources. The 30% federal tax credit for solar energy systems and Missouri laws that facilitate net metering and require large utilities to utilize solar energy will help stimulate future sales.

Missouri has abundant biomass potential for electricity production; forest and crop residues and energy crops like switchgrass and fast-growing trees are considered the most sustainable options. Show Me Energy Cooperative in Centerview produces unique biomass pellets made from agriculture residues to co-fire with coal, reducing emissions.

Waste wood chips, landfill gas and wind provide nearly 5% of Columbia's electricity. The University of Missouri plans to replace one of its six boilers by 2012 with a unit that burns 100% biomass fuel.

Wise use of Missouri's renewable resources can pave the way to a sustainable future.



Jill Cornett, KC/JCP, and Win Colwill, Columbia/BC

Local Leagues

SWMO LWV

(from Cindy Stephens, SWMO President)

The current Southwest Missouri League president recently convened a meeting of former local League presidents. With more than 14 still living, this was a great opportunity to put issues in context, review how procedures and events had changed over time, and identify opportunities for action going forward. While discussing the variety of issues on the horizon, the key piece of advice from the former presidents was to determine when a presentation will make a difference. The “presidents’ council” will be meet again on presidents’ day.

SEMO LWV

(from Sue Brockett, SEMO President)

In our October forum, LWV SEMO presented information to the public on charter government as an alternative to the current commissioner system in Cape Girardeau County. Jan Miller and Mary Ellen Sharp were the speakers. LWV SEMO was asked by our local Chamber of Commerce to research the topic of county charter government. We produced a document called Frequently Asked Questions for Chamber, which can be found on our website at www.lwvsemo.org. LWV SEMO's efforts have been favorably covered by the press. Articles can be found at www.semissourian.com.

Sedalia/PC LWV



Kathleen Boswell (right) of the Sedalia/PC LWV presents the updated Missouri Voters' Handbook to Linda Wheeler, the Circulation and Interlibrary Loan Specialist at State Fair Community College in Sedalia. In addition, Sedalia/PC donated three updated copies of the handbook to the library.

Views of Fall Conference



Maureen Talley, Sedalia/PC LWV, puts the last stitches on the Missouri quilt Friday night before Fall Conference.



Sue Scholl and Jan Archer, both KC/JCP LWV



Jerry Osborne, Moberly/RC LWV and Marti Ott, St. Louis LWV

News In Brief

LWVUS Program Planning. Leagues submit suggestions for national program to be voted on at the national convention in June 2010. All submissions must be done electronically. The deadline for submitting program planning response forms is March 1, 2010. The form is located at [HTTP://www.lwv.org/programplanningform/](http://www.lwv.org/programplanningform/)

This year, the national League will only accept one suggestion for new program per League. In addition Leagues may suggest a review of an existing position and a recommendation of a program item for concurrence.

Please access the Program Planning Leaders Guide for exact instructions because they are different than previously. It requires a lot of preparation and contact with other Leagues. It is highly recommended that League members sign up for the Convention list serve to join the conversation on program planning which you can access through www.lwv.org. You will find that Leagues are already talking about recommending such items as the role of the federal government in education, a department of peace, and civic education. Unless you coordinate your recommendations with other Leagues, getting your suggestions considered is unlikely. Each suggestion must have a critical mass of support. *(from Sydell Shayer, LWVMO off-board director)*

PAVP. We are continuing our work on Public Advocacy for Voter Protection to safeguard full access to voting for all citizens. During the past two years, we have fought against the requirement for a photo ID when voting by making the legislators and general public aware of the numbers of people who would be adversely affected. We anticipate legislation to be introduced again this year. You will receive information and a call to action as the situation develops. If you are not yet on the list for LWVMO/PAVP Action Alerts, please contact the office.

Legislative Action. The legislative session starts soon, and the LWVMO Legislative Bulletin will begin publishing in late January. If you did not receive a Legislative Bulletin last year, please contact the LWVMO office. We will have the traditional “First Filing Day” coffee at the Secretary of State’s office in late February (date TBA), and Legislative Day is Tuesday, March 23, in Room HR 2 in the Capitol basement.

Holiday Gift Idea! As the holidays approach, are you looking for a way to honor and appreciate League members and friends? When your loved ones ask you what gift you would welcome, try this no calorie, zero dusting, good cause option: The League of Women Voters of Missouri or The League of Women Voters Education Fund. We will create a custom, personalized card to send to the honoree. Call or email the office for details, 314-961-6869 or league@lwvmissouri.org

Online Holiday Shopping. Among the items available at the LWVMO store are the Missouri Voters’ Handbook, the 2010 Calendars, pins and note cards, create a card, 90th celebration mugs, 90th stickers, 90th lapel pins. We accept credit cards and PayPal. Great gifts for League friends! Place your order on our website or contact the LWVMO office.

Gift to the Future. Consider a holiday gift to the planet. Subscribe to the online *Missouri Voter* and enjoy color and convenience while saving precious resources. Email the office, and Anna or Julie will do the rest.

Contact Your LWVMO. LWVMO
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Thank You to the Sedalia/PC LWV for their wonderful hospitality at Fall Conference. Excellent facilities. Good food. Yummy fudge! We have come to rely on you every year, and you never let us down. Thank you!

Thank You to the volunteers in the LWVMO office. Our state League could not accomplish so much without your patience and tireless work!

Calendar

- Dec. 24-Jan. 1 LWVMO office closed
- Jan. 5 LWVMO President in LWV office
- Jan. 8 LWVMO board meeting in Columbia
- Jan 15 LWVMO board meeting (snow date)
- Jan 18 MLK Day; office closed
- Feb. 3 LWVMO President in LWV office
- Feb. 14 LWVUS Birthday
- Feb. 15 Presidents' Day; office closed
- Feb. (TBA) Filing Day in Jefferson City
- Feb. 26 Early Voting Study – consensus reports due
- March 23 Legislative Day in Jefferson City

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Happy Holidays!

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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