

VOTER

©

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF TOPEKA & SHAWNEE COUNTY

LWVTSC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

7

Tuesday Topics, TSCPL, 1515 SW 10th Av., Topeka, Lunch provided by Millennium Café beginning at 11:30 AM. Speaker at Noon. Luncheon Menu: Beef stew with rolls, butter, assorted cake. and iced tea., @ \$9.25 per person.

Speaker will be Angela McHardie, Deputy Director of the Juvenile Detention Center in Shawnee County, speaking on “Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative”

14

LWVTSC Board of Directors meeting at TSCPL, 1515 SW 10th Av., Topeka, @ Noon. League members are welcome!

18

Art Is an Invitation to Activism: The Artists Among Us

This fundraiser is a wine and cheese event for members and friends, from 7 to 9 PM at the NOTO Arts Center, 935 N. Kansas Av., Topeka. Admission is \$20 for League members and \$5 for guests. Send checks to Treasurer Theresa Kiernan, 3620 SW York Way, Topeka 66604 by Feb. 16. Guest artists include poets, dancers, author & illustrator, and photographer.

March

7

Tuesday Topics, TSCPL, 1515 SW 10th Av., Topeka, Lunch provided by Millennium Café beginning at 11:30 AM. Speaker at Noon. Luncheon Menu: TBA @ \$9.25 per person.

Speaker will be Janice DeBoer, Executive Director, Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association,

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LWVTSC Board of Directors meeting at TSCPL, 1515 SW 10th Av., Topeka, @ Noon. League members are welcome!

If you need a ride to any League event, contact [Betsy Rohleder](mailto:ronbetsy@cox.net) via email ronbetsy@cox.net or phone 357-1995, or [Anita Epps](mailto:epps.anita@gmail.com) via email epps.anita@gmail.com or phone 232-4851 or [Bernadette Forge](mailto:b.forge@cox.net), email b.forge@cox.net or phone 232-9078.

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Check out our Web Site!

<http://lwvtsc.atwebpages.com>



PREZ SEZ

Camille Nohe,
President



Provisional ballots. President-elect Judy Moler and I recently met with Shawnee County Election Commissioner Andrew Howell and Assistant Election Commissioner Mark Stock to discuss provisional ballots cast in Shawnee County. We learned the following: During the November 2016 election, 2078 people cast provisional ballots in Shawnee County. Of these, 1,297 provisional ballots were counted; 781 provisional ballots were not counted. The bulk of the provisional ballots that were not counted (578) were cast by people who were not registered to vote. Another 88 did not follow Kansas law (i.e., 9 voted in advance and at the polls on election day; 27 advance voters did not sign their ballot envelope; 49 did not have identification and did not present identification prior to the Board of Canvassers meeting; 2 faxed ballot, not allowed under law; and one advance voter was deceased prior to ballot reaching Election Office).

Art Is an Invitation to Activism. Save the date: February 28 from 7-9 p.m. at the NOTO Arts Center, 935 N. Kansas Ave. At that time and place, come and enjoy a wine and cheese event celebrating local artists: photographs by Carol Yoho and poetry from Dennis Bosley, both League members; a poetry duel from Topeka's Dennis Etzell and Annette Billings; dancing of Spanish Sevillians – flamenco – by Silvia Buenovoska and her daughter Noa.

This will be a fundraiser to support our League's mission with local art. All this for \$20 for League members and \$5 for each of your guests. So come, invite your friends, get out and enjoy an evening as winter is coming to a close.

Kansas League of Women Voters news. If you have an idea for a Kansas League program (i.e., a proposal for a study), present your idea first to our Board, which if in agreement, will forward it to the Kansas League Board for consideration. . . . Currently, 3 lawsuits are ongoing related to voter rights issues. . . . The Kansas League is seeking nominees for positions on their Board. If you are interested or know someone who may be interested, contact the Kansas Board via email (lwv.kansas@gmail.com). . . . The Kansas League is also seeking one of our members to serve on the 100th Anniversary celebration committee. Planning for this 2020 Anniversary needs to begin soon, according to Kansas League President Marge Ahrens.

Bylaws. A committee comprised of Judy Moler, Theresa Kiernan and me reviewed our League bylaws, and proposed a numbers of primarily "clean up" changes. Howev-

er, two policy changes required by the US League are also included: (1) lower the membership eligibility age to 16 (from 18), and (2) remove the membership eligibility of citizenship. Our Board approved all of the proposed changes at its January meeting. These proposed bylaws changes will next be sent to all members via email at least 3 weeks prior to the Annual Meeting in April, at which time they will be voted on by the members.



Greetings from Voter Services

With the passing of the baton from Bernadette Forge in late October, Voter Services is working to expand our presence in Shawnee County high schools. We are currently developing an additional program on "The Importance of Voting". Our goal is to deliver this to as many high school seniors as we can and then register those seniors. To help implement this plan we applied for a grant from the League of Women Voters Education Fund. The grant has been submitted and while we wait we continue to develop the program.

In early November we registered new voters at the last Shawnee County Naturalization Ceremony of 2016. A sincere thank you goes to Peggy Hinck, Georgia Sandlin, Jeanne Frieman, Edith Bronson, Elizabeth Post, and Ethel Edwards. These members helped with the registration process. With the dawning of 2017, we will continue our presence at these ceremonies to welcome and to register new citizen voters. The first ceremony of 2017 will be February 17 in the Brown vs Board of Education Museum at 10:30 AM.

Again this year our community will hold elections; these will be local elections conducted in the fall as mandated by a new state law. As President Obama said in his farewell address, "We must all accept responsibilities of citizenship." One of those responsibilities is voting. Voter Services will continue to maximize voter registrations so citizens can help create a more participatory democracy by voicing their opinions at the ballot box.

Until next time,
Jan Martens, Voter Services Chairperson

Who Represents Us?

By Jason Shaw , Guest Columnist

You are not alone if you feel disheartened and disappointed after the primaries and the election of 2016. The world in which we live has become a place where all of our efforts to reclaim our Republic seem futile. The wool has been pulled over our eyes, so that we believe in our hearts and minds that our attempts to put forward politicians who are true advocates of change, who would advocate for public funded elections and anti-corruption measures, are all to no avail.

However difficult the task, I have signed on to take back our Republic. I am now dedicated to truly working with those across the entire political spectrum, from the most staunchly conservative to the most progressive activist, to reclaim what we have lost to special interest groups, lobbyists, and the multi-million dollar corporations who buy their representation through gifts and campaign contributions, even when that representation goes against the majority of voter's interests.

Since the 19th Amendment was ratified on August 18, 1920, big money has corrupted this basic right to vote. Almost seven years ago today, Citizen's United was passed. Corporations are using vast amounts of money to push forward their candidates in the "money election" that is our primaries while at the same time destroying the integrity of the candidates the people would like to see put forward using unethical and misleading scare tactics. Informed women and men alike are having their votes compromised by these special interests.

Many of us on the right, left, or center let our most important issues of the day determine our vote. We can't do that anymore. We need to come together and make fixing our broken system the number one issue. We need to be willing to vote across the aisle if this is not the number one issue for anyone in your usual political party. Let us join together to stop political bribery, end secret money, fix our

www.represent.us



broken elections by changing how they are funded, and put a good system of enforcement in place. How?

My name is Jason Shaw, and I'm trying to start a chapter of Represent.US in Topeka, a nationwide, grassroots movement of people on all sides of the political spectrum organizing in order to get this done. But I need your help. If you want to learn more, stay informed, or potentially help out as a team member, please email me at out-law.shaw77@gmail.com.

Shawnee County Commission and Topeka City Council Panel



A panel composed of Shawnee County Commissioners and Topeka City Council members spoke at the December 6, 2016, Tuesday Topics. Panel members present were Karen Hiller, Tony Emerson, Elaine Schwartz, and Jeff Coen who represented the City Council. Shelly Buhler and Kevin Cook who represented the County Commission.

Kevin Cook talked about what they can control and what they cannot control. He said they think of the county as a whole. He thanked those who voted for him.

Shelly Buhler spoke about Grace Med, a non-profit clinic, and public health. She said compensation for employees is an issue. Pay was raised after an independent study was conducted. She addressed the issue of the Willard Bridge that was approved in a local agreement between the Topeka City Council and the Shawnee County Commission and also spoke about the Expocentre and Topeka Zoo projects.

Karen Hiller said the City Council thinks of city-wide needs as well as those in their respective districts. She spoke of different needs and decisions on policy as well as projects. People want everything done. "Call city hall" is a common approach from citizens. Where to draw the line is an issue. The council has worked on infrastructure and improving public input. Private funds (for the city) grew to over \$3 million.

Tony Emerson who was appointed to the council to fill a vacancy described his experiences as a small business owner whose business did a lot of infrastructure work for the city. He sees a need for more time for contracts on jobs.

Jeff Coen, also a fiscal conservative, said one of his achievements was the nudity ban Elaine Schwartz described herself as a fiscal conservative. She is not running in 2017. She spoke about local politics and what she has accomplished, the Topeka Zoo and the McFarland Garden. She thanked public workers



Destination Topeka



Matt Pivarnik, CEO and President of the Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce and GO Topeka, spoke at the January 3 Tuesday Topics.

Mr. Pivarnik presented a rich overview of the many organizations that work together with the Chamber for the common purpose of economic

development and prosperity in Topeka. Among the organizations mentioned were the Chamber of Commerce; GO Topeka that works for economic development by helping new businesses develop as well as the expansion and retention of established businesses; FORGE, young professionals whose mission is to attract and retain young talent; Workforce and Education; EMBD, an entrepreneurial and minority business development organization; Heartland Visioning that focuses on the quality of the dynamic core. The total budget for all the organizations is \$6.9 million.

Mr. Pivarnik identified his focus areas:

1. Economic development
2. Legislative success at the local, regional, state, and federal levels
3. Quality of life
4. Workforce and education

In addition to local organizations, Mr. Pivarnik identified external partners that include the League of Women Voters, the Department of Commerce, the Topeka/Shawnee County Library, the Community Foundation and others as well as Manhattan, and Lawrence. He also spoke about the emphasis on small businesses. A Small Business Council that includes JEDO and GO Topeka help new businesses and provide incentives. Mayor Wolgast, Shelly Buhler, and Bartlett and West co-chair the council.

An holistic implementation plan and accountability measurements (metrics) are being developed for the following

1. Develop home-grown talent
2. Create vibrant and attractive places
3. Grow a diverse economy
4. Promote a positive image
5. Collaborate for a strong community.

Widespread community input was needed to proceed with the plan. A steering committee was organized composed of forty community leaders. Twenty-three hundred people responded to a survey. Unlike results from previous surveys and studies, the measurement components of the plan under development will ensure the plan is actually implemented.

According to Mr. Pivarnik, 2017 will see the completion of the plan and metrics, a continued focus on entrepreneurial efforts, and the East Topeka Learning Center. He hopes Topeka can improve its brand and develop more pride in the community. He said people who move here from other states have a more positive impression of Topeka than those who have spent their lives here. In order for our young people to want to remain in Topeka, we must improve our brand – our image. His excitement about current developments and future plans for Topeka was refreshing and positive.



(There were 42 members and 4 visitors present today, Jan 3, 2017, at the LWV meeting.)



Shawnee County Commission meeting: 12-1- 2016 Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present

*Approved request to abolish position of Applications Systems Tech w/ DOC effective pay period #1 of 2017. This position was transferred from IT to DOC in 2012 due to DOC IT needs at that time. Current needs do not warrant the necessity of this position. Human Resources protocol was reviewed when a position is terminated but not the current employee in that job. Options for the employee were discussed.

Shawnee County Commission meeting: 12-8-2016 Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present

*Agreed to a letter of support for the merger of Westar Energy w/ KCP&L. The benefits are an issue of getting better at providing safe, reliable, & affordable service.

* Review of voucher payments showed Election Commission is over-budget. Head of dept. is responsible for stay-



ing w/in budget. This will be followed up at the next meeting.

*Approved request to submit an Application for Accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies w/ an application cost of \$100. Such accreditation gives a stamp of approval for the public. It also is a validation of services, improves customer service, & increases the opportunity to be awarded grants.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 12-12-2016

Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present

*Acknowledged receipt of Abstract of Votes Cast & Certification General Election, Nov 8, 2016.

*Held public hearing re: the fact finding report between SNCO & Teamsters Local 696 re: 2016 wages for Parks + Rec maintenance workers. The CBIZ salary report showed these workers are being paid more than the local rate & recommended a raise. The Teamsters want this raise. SNCO is disinclined to give it.

*Accepted transfer of \$140,000 from Register of Deeds Tech Fund to Land Records Fund. This fund is generated by document fees & is available to other depts. dealing w/ land.

*Acknowledged receipt of petition for a curfew in Montara subdivision. Reason is increased nighttime vandalism. Acknowledgment is not permission to implement a curfew. Legal issues need to be clarified. The sheriff's actions are limited to justifiable cause.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 12-15-2016

Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present

*Approved request to renovate 2 inmate cells to meet ADA compliance.

Settled wage impasse w/ Parks and rec. Employee Unit of Teamsters Local No 696. These employees will not get raises; other dept. employees will get raises. The CBIZ wage study showed employees in the Teamster group are paid more than the surrounding area but also suggested a raise

for them. This was the crux of the impasse.

*Results of local survey of 4-H members, done by KSU, were presented. It evaluated 4-H's effectiveness in fostering positive connections, encouraging responsible decisions, & developing communication & citizenship skills. The study indicates 4-H has a very positive influence on these factors.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 12-19-2016

Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present

*Approved appropriation of available transient guest taxes (approx. \$50,000):

\$10,000 to Riverfront Authority, remainder to Expo Center. Vote 2:1, Commissioner Archer opposed. He wants to see Expo Center be successful & would prefer it get the entire amount.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 12-29-2016

Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present The meeting consisted of routine business issues.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 1-5-2017

Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present

*Authorized execution of contract w/ Tyler Technologies to provide prisoner data for collective database entered into state & national databases; this will include interface, installation, & yearly maintenance for 5 years. Benefits of database are victim notification of prisoner release, stop & start Dept. of Labor benefits prisoners may be receiving, & allow law enforcement to check if someone w/ a warrant is incarcerated.

*Authorized execution of contract w/ Dream Team Cleaning, Inc for custodial services @ the Courthouse, North Annex, Health Agency, & Elections Office w/costs divided & paid through operating budgets of Facilities, Health, & Elections Offices, for period of Feb 6, 2017-Feb 5, 2018. It was noted that a courthouse employee is also an owner of this cleaning company. As a SNCO employee at work she will not engage in this other business.

Shawnee County Commission Meeting: 1-12-2017

Observer: Nancy Perih

3 Commissioners present

*Presentation on K-State Research & Extension Council programming. Susan Fangman, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent, presented findings from her program on Medicare Part D. Of 204 participants, 90 of them were able to save from \$300 to \$2000 a year by making changes in their medication providers. She is interested in reaching more people.

USD 437 Washburn Rural Board Meeting: 11-21-2016

Observer: Mary Galligan

7 members present (including one on the phone)

*Approved: Agenda; consent agenda; curricula and materials- Spanish, Math, Biology, Driver's Ed., Theater, and Economics; board policies (updates recommended by KASB); KASB delegate assembly resolutions

*Discussed on first reading: Board policy updates recommended by KASB regarding student dress code, defibrillators, student accidents and foreign exchange students; and ELA novel materials (both to be placed on consent agenda at next meeting)

*Went into Executive Session twice, once for 20 min. & once for 10 min., to discuss personnel matters for non-elected personnel; and matters relating to the security of the board, school, school buildings or facilities, or IT system of the school.

No action was taken subsequent to Executive Session.

USD 437 Washburn Rural Board Meeting: 12-5-2016

Observer: Jacquie Lightcap

6 members present

*Approved: Consent agenda (minutes from November 21, bills in the amount of \$2,735,068.97, classified and certified resignations/retirements, new personnel, treasurer's cash report, approved English Language Arts novel materials, board policy updates, and budget revision.)

*Received/Discussed: Parents as Teachers update; District Financial Audit; Bond Refunding update (rates are not favorable right now so this item will be looked at in the future.); Kansas Association of School Boards Annual Conference Update



**Went into Executive Session at 7:00 until 7:12 to discuss personnel matters for non-elected personnel; and matters*

relating to actions adversely or favorably affecting a person as a student, patient, or resident of a public institution, except that any such person shall have the right to a public hearing if requested by that person; and consultation with an attorney that would be deemed privileged in attorney-client relationship. Subsequent to Executive Session, the board voted unanimously to approve certain student transfer requests.

USD 437 Washburn Rural Board Meeting: 1-3-2017

Observer: Mary Galligan

All 7 Board members present

*Approved (7-0): Agenda, consent agenda items and financial audit report

*Discussed on first reading: Calendar for school yr. 2017-18; High school band trip, spring 2018 (Orlando, FL); and purchase of material for AP literature class

*Received communication from the Auburn Washburn Foundation regarding its search for an Executive Director. Went into Executive Session for 8 minutes. Subsequent to Executive Session approved student transfers (7-0) and released a teacher from current contract (7-0).

USD 501 Topeka School Board Meeting: 11-3-2016

Observers: Vicki Arnett and Janet Cathcart

All board members were present.

*Topeka Public Schools announced a school supply drive. More information may be obtained at: topekapublicschools.net

*An update regarding the impact of school closure was discussed. Bishop, Shaner and Avondale West will be closed at the end of this school year. The discussion was about the proposed boundary lines to meet the

enrollment requirements and limitations of the new Jardine campus. Maximum proposed enrollment is 779 students. Jardine will be an ELL site.

*It was announced that TPS graduation rate is up at all five high schools. It is the highest it has been in seven years.

The superintendent reviewed the 2016-17 through 2020-21 strategic plan. The plan will be final in Dec. 2016 & is developed around five goals. Some action steps were highlighted, including the provision of enhanced services to students at the juvenile detention center.

USD 501 Topeka School Board Meeting: 12-1-2016

Observer: Janet Cathcart

All board members present

*Tammy Austin and Larry Robbins were both recognized as Door Openers as part of this year's Topeka's Top Twenty Under Forty. They both believe it is part of their professional responsibilities to help others succeed.

*Public Comment from Myesha Thompson gave an update from JUMP. They wanted to bring to the board's attention the housing problems/needs of citizens of Topeka and that those same people are often times 501 students. JUMP asked for the districts support to the city regarding the housing issues.

*Dr. Anderson had the directors give an overview of the strategic plan. Mr. Kipp gave an update on Tyler Pulse System which is a new attendance system that will help the district meet its goal of meeting the state's attendance rate. The state attendance rate is 94% and last year for the school year 501's rate was 92.9%. There were also presentations from College and Career Readiness, Gifted and Special Education, English Language Learner Program, Staff Professional Development and District Finance. Some goals for Staff Professional Development are to have 100% staff coverage at the beginning of the school year. This year it was at 94.9%. Also plan to reduce the number of alternate licensed staff by 10% and finding the most effective teachers to mentor student teachers.

*Under district finance Mrs. Kirk asked about a better program to use for measuring and determining best budget practices but Mr. Menke said that is dependent on future school funding. A written copy of

the five year Strategic Plan will be presented at the shortened December meeting and then the meeting in January will be used to review the plan thoroughly.

*Mrs. Wallace advised the board that all the current changes to the courses were merely "housecleaning" changes to align them with the Next Generation Science Standards. The changes will be on the next board agenda for action.

USD 501 Topeka School Board Meeting: 1-5-2017

Observer: Janet Cathcart

All board members present

*Dr. Anderson is starting a new tradition. Every year during School Board Recognition month (January) members will receive a t-shirt from a different 501 school that they can wear when they attend school functions.

*HS School Principal Mid Year Focus Group-Students First are working as a Team for Continuous Improvement. The principals from Highland Park, Dr. Beryl New, Topeka High, Rebecca Morrissey and Topeka West, Dustin Dick presented the findings of the group. They discussed time management & getting the most out of classroom time, goals for this school year and steps for the following school year. Highland Park is starting a night school option to help their students who have to work nights to help their families but still be able to get their class time in. The principals proposed the possibility of adopting two schedules, a first through seventh hour schedule and a second through eighth hour schedule to help students who may be responsible for getting younger siblings to school.

"Huge need for kids to connect with that one person" Dustin Dick
 "Maintain a rigorous curriculum while still connecting" Dr. Beryl New
 "Be there for our students; they are more than just their core classes. They still need nurturing even in high school" Rebecca Morrissey

*The Five Year strategic plan was again discussed. The five goals are: (1) student learning; (2) highly effective staff; (3) district finance; (4) school climate and equality; and (5) career preparation and college and career placement.

art is an invitation to activism

the artists amongst us



A WINE AND CHEESE EVENT FOR
LEAGUE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS AT
THE NOTO ARTS CENTER



**ADMISSION \$20 FOR LEAGUE
MEMBERS; \$5 FOR GUESTS**

Feb. 18, 2017 7-9 p.m. 935 N. Kansas Ave.

A fundraiser for the Topeka-Shawnee County League of Women Voters. Enjoy the photographs of Carol Yoho and poetry from Dennis Bosley, both League members; poetry from Topeka's Annette Billings and Dennis Etzel; the children's' book written and illustrated by Leaguer Glennie Buckley and Barbara Waterman Peters, and dancing of Spanish Sevillians—flamenco--by Silvia Bueno Montavez and her daughter, Noa Fernandez Bueno. Support the League's mission with local art and artists.

Send checks to Treasurer Theresa Kiernan, 3620 SW York Way, Topeka 66604
By Feb. 16

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League of Women Voters
Topeka/Shawnee County
website: [http://
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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TOPEKA SHAWNEE COUNTY
Peggy Hinck, VOTER Editor
3722 NE Kincaid Rd
Topeka KS 66617-3625



I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League of Women Voters. I enclose

_____ \$55 for a 1 year Individual Membership

_____ \$85 for a 1 year Household Membership

_____ \$85 for a 1 year Sustaining Membership (includes a \$30 donation to the League)

_____ \$100 for a 1 year Household Sustaining Membership

_____ \$25 for a 1 year Student (age 18) Membership

I am unable to join the League at this time, but enclosed is a tax-deductible contribution in the amount of \$_____

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Please make check payable to: **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS TOPEKA SHAWNEE COUNTY**

Mail to: Carrie Lancaster, Membership, 2253 SW Alameda Dr., Topeka KS 66614-4220