



# VOTER

## Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County

### How To Reach Us

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### January 2011

Volume 61  
Number 6

*Since 1920, the League of Women Voters has been a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*

## **Saturday, January 8 General Meeting**

**Atonement Lutheran Church - 9948 Metcalf**

8:30 a.m. - Socializing  
9 - 11 a.m. - Program  
11 a.m. - noon - Board Meeting

**“Current Issues; Future Interests”  
Program Planning for 2011**

January is **YOUR** meeting:  
The chance to voice your interests and concerns  
to shape our programs for the year ahead.

*We look forward to seeing you!*

# President's Message

This is the season to be with family and friends and to celebrate many blessings and hope for the future with a feeling of joy, good health and continued peace.

Thanks to all who made our December League Holiday party a success. Ann Arnott, Anne McCleery, and Cynthia Wilson did an outstanding job decorating and making the party a success. We had many guests including mayors, newly elected members to the county commissioners, a sitting judge, and several representatives who were not retained in office. They were all gracious to our League, noting the importance of the League and its work in political circles. Needless to say, they were all impressed with the quality of the savory and sweet treats.

Remember that in January we will plan topics for the upcoming year. LWV of Kansas has a list of recommendations to retain or drop on current state positions. The three main topics are Government, Social Policy and Natural Resources. (See page 3 on these positions). National has two proposed studies for the upcoming year, (one) The Role of Federal Government in Public Education and (two) Privatization: the transfer of government functions to private agencies.

Please note that if an individual League member would like to suggest a topic to study that he/she be aware each may be asked to chair a committee or at least provide contact information to have this topic completed in two years. Considerable time and energy will go into this endeavor and perhaps a program can be presented for a particular topic rather than a full study. This might be a way to inform our members of a certain interest and yet not be tied to a long study.

On December 14, I attended a Public Policy Forum at the Village Presbyterian Church on Mission Road, which was co-hosted by UCS and United Way. This was a forum to hear discussion regarding the future of Kansas budget concerns with human service providers and advocates of these programs. John Vratil, Kansas Senate Republican of District 11; Terrie Huntington, Kansas Senate Republican of District 7; and Pat Colloton, Kansas House Republican of District 28 were the featured speakers. Their comments focused on the many adjustments that are planned for the recent and upcoming state budget and the substantial amount lost from the Federal Stimulus monies. The legislators asked that the League members take time to send their thoughts and remarks to the following e-mail addresses: [John.Vratil@senate.ks.gov](mailto:John.Vratil@senate.ks.gov); [Terrie.Huntington@senate.ks.gov](mailto:Terrie.Huntington@senate.ks.gov); [Pat.Colloton@house.ks.gov](mailto:Pat.Colloton@house.ks.gov) Their remarks were not upbeat about the financing of human services in Johnson County. If we are really interested in preserving the current funding for social services, let's take time to contact these legislators and give them our thoughts.

*Harriett Anderson*

## International Relations Committee

The League's Great Decisions discussion group will have its first meeting on Tuesday, February 1 in the double meeting room of the Central Resource Library from 7 to 8:30 p.m. If you don't already have the discussion manual, call the International Relations Council (816-221-4204) to order one for \$21 delivered. The manuals should arrive in January. The topics for the eight meetings (first and third Tuesdays) are Rebuilding Haiti, National Security, Horn of Africa, Responding to the Financial Crisis, Germany, Sanctions and Nonproliferation, the Caucasus, and Global Governance.

*Nan Wilson*

## From the Historian

While you are enjoying coffee and treats before the next few meetings, be sure to stop by the table where snap shots from the past few years will be on display. Most of them are available for anyone to take, but a few are for the archives. I may ask for names, dates, and places. The museum will not archive photographs that do not have specific Johnson County significance. This will be an enjoyable walk with friends through League's recent history.

*Diane Kuhn*

## February 5 LWV Program

**"Politicians and Campaign Money: What's Fair Disclosure?"** Carol Williams, Executive Director, Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission will spearhead this program. Panelists will include State Representative (and LWV member) Pat Colloton.

**For January 8 Meeting---LWV-KANSAS 2011 PROGRAM PLANNING REPORT FORM**

**Part I.** Recommendations to retain or drop current state positions. (Find complete position statements at [www.lwvk.org](http://www.lwvk.org))

Put a check mark on the line that expresses your choice for each position.

**RETAIN                  DROP**

**Government**

- |       |       |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | County Government (1967)*                                  |
| _____ | _____ | Criminal Justice: Adult Corrections (1976)                 |
| _____ | _____ | Criminal Justice: Juvenile Corrections and Services (2005) |
| _____ | _____ | Criminal Justice: Court System (1975)                      |
| _____ | _____ | Criminal Justice: Sentencing (1982)                        |
| _____ | _____ | Education Governance (1998)                                |
| _____ | _____ | Legislative Apportionment (1975)                           |
| _____ | _____ | State Finance (1993)                                       |
| _____ | _____ | Election Administration (2003)                             |

**Natural Resources**

- |       |       |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | Environmental Quality: Hazardous Waste Management (1983) |
| _____ | _____ | Environmental Quality: Solid Waste Management ((1973)    |
| _____ | _____ | Environmental Quality: Water Resources Management (2008) |
| _____ | _____ | Land Use (1974)  |
| _____ | _____ | Prairie Park (1974)                                      |

**Social Policy**

- |       |       |   |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | Equality of Opportunity (1981)                        |
| _____ | _____ | Health: Medical Indigence (1987)                      |
| _____ | _____ | Meeting Basic Human Needs – SRS (1995)                |
| _____ | _____ | Children at Risk (1997)                               |
| _____ | _____ | Living Wage (2000)                                    |
| _____ | _____ | Privatization of Child Welfare Services by SRS (1999) |
- \* Indicates the date the position was adopted, or last updated

**Part II.** If you wish to propose an expansion or an update of an existing statement of position, please submit a proposal with the following information:

- Scope of Study:
- Time for Completion:
- Method for Member Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_ Consensus \_\_\_\_\_ Concurrence

**Part III.** If you wish to propose a study of a new issue and development of a statement of position, please submit a proposal with the following information:

- Scope of Study:
- League’s Effect on Public Policy on this Issue:
- Time for Completion:
- Method for Member Agreement: \_\_\_\_\_ Consensus \_\_\_\_\_ Concurrence

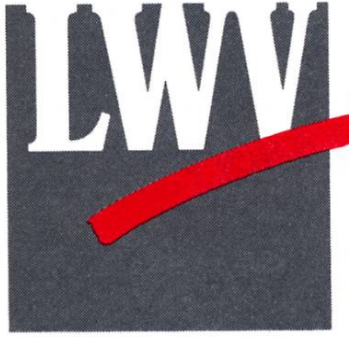
**Making Democracy Work Award**

The League of Women Voters invites you to nominate an outstanding community leader for our annual Making Democracy Work Award. The League celebrates leaders who have envisioned a way to improve our community and who have mobilized others to work collaboratively to affect positive change. The Making Democracy Work Award will honor one such individual who has, in the League tradition, helped make our local governments strong, vibrant, fair and responsive to the needs of all members of our community.

Nominations are open to any individual who has been a vital part of the work force and who has contributed to our community in a meaningful way. Nominees may be nominated by a friend or colleague, or the nominees can apply themselves. A nomination form is posted on our website ([www.lwjoco.org](http://www.lwjoco.org)) and in the December VOTER. Please note the deadline is February 1, 2010.

The winner will be presented at our Johnson County League of Women Voters’ Annual Meeting on May 1, 2010. Please note that the winner must be available to receive the award on May 1. We believe that there is no greater tribute that we can make than to honor a leader who continues to demonstrate commitment, leadership and a passion for civic improvement.

*Carisa de Anda*



# Making Democracy Work

## 2011 Nomination Form

Nominator (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

~~~~~

Nominee (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

~~~~~

In a sentence, explain why you are nominating this person. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is your relationship to the nominee? \_\_\_\_\_

**Please attach an essay of not more than 250 words** telling how he or she fits the following criteria for this award:

- *Has served the public sector or the community for at least five years.*
- *Has exhibited honesty and integrity.*
- *Has made a difference in the community.*
- *Has kept promises made to others or the community.*
- *Has proven she/he is a highly principled individual.*
- *Has demonstrated leadership in effecting positive change.*
- *Will be available to attend the award ceremony on May 7, 2011.*

Please return form by February 1, 2011 to: LWV MDW Award, P.O. Box 13491, Overland Park, KS 66282

## League Offers Essay Contest for High School Seniors

For the second year, the League of Women Voters is conducting an essay contest for high school seniors in Johnson County high schools. Each entrant is asked to submit a 500 word answer to the question, "If you were registering an 18-year old to vote, what rationale would you give as to why it is vital for our democracy to exercise the right to vote?"

Schools have been sent the rules of the contest so that entries may be received no later than February 15, 2011. The judging will be done by a panel of League members. As they read, they will not know the gender or school represented by each entry. The prize for the winner will be a \$1,000 scholarship sent to the college where the essayist plans to enroll. We will invite the winner to read the winning essay at our annual Making Democracy Work Awards Program on Saturday, May 7, 2011.

*Harriet Duff*

## Naturalization Ceremonies

Naturalization Ceremonies are held at the Federal Courthouse in KCK at 5th and State usually on the last Friday of every month. The ceremony begins at 1:30 and lasts about 45 minutes. We then register the new citizens to vote. This takes about an hour. If you would like to attend and participate in this moving event, please contact Virginia Johnson (1-770-757-2136 or [johnson.virginia@yahoo.com](mailto:johnson.virginia@yahoo.com)). Please mark your calendar for the upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies.

- January 21\* Magistrate Judge Gerald L. Rushfelt (Scheduling conflict on last Friday.)
- February 25 Magistrate Judge James P. O'Hara

*Virginia Johnson*



*Volunteers staffing the table are from left: Virginia Johnson, Sheri Potter, Christine Hutchins, Brooke Goc (Lawrence/Douglas LWV,) and Mary Gitzendonner*



## Member Spotlight: Nan Wilson

Nan Wilson, chair of the International Relations Committee, has long been interested in international issues, the cultures of other countries and in helping to solve challenges in her own community.

Nan grew up in Michigan. She graduated from Wellesley College with a degree in economics and met her future husband, David, in Boston. After they married, they lived in Cambridge, MA, then in Detroit, and in 1963 moved to the Kansas City area. Nan and Dave have six children. As a busy mother in Johnson County, she met Muriel Petruzelli, a long time member of the JCLWV, who introduced her to the League.



*From left:  
Ximena Poveda, Nan Wilson, Paulina Estella Guerra.*

When Dave's business took them to Wichita, Nan joined the League as a way to become acquainted in the community. In 1972 the Wichita League selected Nan as a Vice President on their board. Her proudest accomplishment was the organization of a bi-racial committee of community members that helped the League to receive a federal grant to hire an ombudsman for the Wichita School District.

Nan said, "It was highly controversial, but I loved it. Eventually, the School District took over the program." In 1974 Nan's family moved back to Johnson County.

She explained, "I decided to go back to school to get a Master's Degree and had received a fellowship at Wichita State, but our move necessitated my transfer to KU where I received an MPA in city management.

"For my internship, the City of Kansas City, Mo. created a special position for me as Consumer Affairs Officer in 1975-76. It was lots of fun because I got all the complaints to solve and talked to many groups (including the LWVKC) about consumer protection. Because the position required that I live in Kansas City, we took an apartment in the city for that year. Then I taught Economics at Johnson County Community College for 22 years and am now 'Professor Emerita.'"

In 2001, Nan was appointed as the Kansas representative on the IRS Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP) for a three year term. Nan became chair of the regional group that heard complaints and suggestions from citizens. Small panel groups met twice a month by telephone or in various cities to hear those issues and make recommendations to the IRS. Nan said, "Working with TAP, I met many interesting people from all over the U.S."

From 2004 through 2008 Nan was president of the Kansas Paraguay Partners, a division of the Partners of the Americas, a non-profit organization devoted to increasing understanding between the U.S. and Latin America through cultural exchanges.

As she came closer to retiring from JCCC, Nan became more active in the League and was elected President in 1992 - 93. Following her long time interest in world affairs, she joined the International Relations Committee and is now its chair and coordinates the League's Great Decisions program. Recently Nan and Diane Kuhn researched and completed *Part II, the History of JCLWV*.

The biggest undertaking as chair of the International Committee has been the hosting of two visitors, Ximena Poveda and Paulina Estela Guerra, from Colombia. The U.S. State Department's Office of Citizen Exchanges gave a grant to the National League of Women Voters who in turn presented the JCLWV a \$1200 gift plus funding for hosting, food, and transportation for the two young women in April, 2010.

"I've hosted a lot of groups," Nan said, "but the two visitors from Colombia had the most serious intentions to learn about local government. I would like to see more hosting of international groups by our League."

*Polly Swafford*

## Help on Legislative Issues for the LWV of Kansas

**Wanted:** League member to receive email from the Pro Choice coalition and monitor Action Alerts, activities announcements. The Legislative session may have bill that attempts to restrict women's choice further. Interested member would mainly work at own computer. Contact LWVK president, Ernestine Krehbile LWVK 316-652-9229 or [ekrehbiel@cox.net](mailto:ekrehbiel@cox.net)

**Wanted:** Someone interested in the issue of abolishing the Kansas Death Penalty to be available to receive email news from the Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty. We came close last session, so we need someone to stay on top of the issue by email to let us know when a bill is introduced or is going to have a hearing in a legislative committee. Interested member would work at own computer. Contact LWVK president, Ernestine Krehbile LWVK (316-652-9229 or [ekrehbiel@cox.net](mailto:ekrehbiel@cox.net))

## Observer Corps

Connie Richards has agreed to add the Library Board to her Observer activities, and Virginia Johnson is looking into the Johnson County Commission meeting. Virginia would like to share this job. Anyone interested? Several other important boards are not being covered. What is your area on interest? "Let's make a deal." Contact me (631-4441 or [nancyfj@everestkc.net](mailto:nancyfj@everestkc.net)).

Thanks to Cynthia Wilson for her informative report on the Special Committee on Assessment and Taxation.

*Nancy Jefferis, Observer Corps Chair*

## OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

### Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees December 9 meeting

- Makeup of 2011 State Legislature: Lobbyist Dick Carter stated it's too early to size up the new legislature, other than "three groups: conservative, liberal and somewhere in the middle."
- New business: Dr. Grove read portions of a recent review of the College by AQUIP (Academic Quality Improvement program), stating that the comments in the review were "highly complimentary--unusually so, for any member college." Areas mentioned for improvement were not major and are ones the college is already working on.
- Kansas Association of Community College Trustees (KACCT): Trustee Mitchelson, Board representative (and also current president of KACCT), reported on a recent meeting he and President Calaway attended. He stated that KACCT will continue to push for greater cooperation among the 19 state junior colleges, which account for most of the technical education in the state (as opposed to the technical schools); JCCC's contributions account for 18 to 20 percent of KACCT's total budget. As federal funding dries up, he expects for-profit technical schools to be re-examining their agendas.
- JCCC Foundation has \$2.6 million on the way to the \$3 million needed for the challenge grant for the proposed Culinary Center.

*Ann Arnott*

### Johnson County WaterOne Board December 14 meeting ([www.waterone.org](http://www.waterone.org))

- Higher 2011 rates OKd. A three-month review culminated in approving a 4.4 percent rate increase starting January 1, 2011. The most typical customer's bill would increase about \$1.53/month. "Typical" means using 8,000 gallons/month annually on a 5/8 inch residential meter; that bill currently is \$36.92. In 2010, the increase was 4.9 percent.
- Selling water to Belton? Discussions are under way about possibly selling water at a wholesale rate to Belton, Mo. Currently that city buys wholesale from Kansas City, Missouri, but its continued growth prompted looking at alternatives. If approved, Belton would need from 2.5 to 4.0 million gallons/day, supplied by the Nall Avenue plant that's under construction. Consultants are studying the pros and cons including regulatory requirements of a two-state agreement.

*Ellen Miller*

**Special Committee on Assessment and Taxation**

On November 12, 2010 the interim 2010 Special Committee on Assessment and Taxation convened at the statehouse to review the Kansas Tax Structure. Committee Members consisted of: Senators Les Donovan, Vice-Chairperson; Terrie Huntington; Dick Kelsey; Janis Lee; and Bob Marshall. Representatives from the Kansas House included: Richard Carlson, Chairperson; Greg Smith; Stan Frownfelter; Jeff King; Marvin Kleeb; Julie Menghini; Don Schroeder; Sharon Schwartz; and Dolores Furtado (sitting in for Lisa Benlon).

Chris Courtwright, Principal Economist of the Legislative Research Department presented an economic forecast prepared for Governor Mark Parkinson, Governor-Elect Sam Brownback and the Legislative Budget Committee. Attached to the report were the State General Fund Receipts, detailing the source of tax revenue for fiscal year 2010 and consensus estimates of revenue projections as of 11/2/2010 for FY 2011 and FY 2012.

**MORNING SESSION:** Prior to presenting the report Chris explained the concept of diminishing returns: It was noted that sales tax increases in increments of .001 up to .01 have diminishing returns on tax revenue collections.

Attached to the report was a table of State General Fund Tax Receipts for 2010. Actual tax receipts for 2010 were derived from the following sources (rounded to 2 decimal places):

Property Tax (Motor Carrier)	0.5%
Individual Income Taxes	48.5%
Corporate & Financial Inst Income Tax	4.8%
Retail Sales, Use & Excise Tax	43.5%
Estate Tax	0.1%
Other Taxes (Insurance Prem & Misc)	<u>2.6%</u>
Total	100%

Property tax receipts are levied and collected by local units of government to support K-12 education and two State building funds. They are not included in the data at left.

Katrin Osterhaus of Legislative Post Audit presented to the Special Committee performance audit reports that were completed in February and March of 2010. Performance Audit Reports are online at [www.accesskansas.org/srv-postaudit/start.do](http://www.accesskansas.org/srv-postaudit/start.do) Search Criteria for Kansas Tax Revenues, year 2010.

The results of the property tax and tax credit performance audits are not summarized here as the subject matter of the committee meeting focused on the contents of the sales tax exemption performance audit.

The Sales Tax Exemption Performance Audit compiled all exemptions and classified them into the following categories:

Legally Required (Interstate Commerce, Federal Social Svcs)	\$	32.4
Conceptual Tax Policy		3,060.5
Governmental		471.6
Public Policy: Ag		52.4
Public Policy: Business		218.7
Public Policy: Charitable, Religious & Benevolent		23.7
Public Policy: Named Charitable Organizations		2.3
Public Policy: Consumer		356.3
Public Policy: Educational		61.5
Public Policy: Services		6.0
Public Policy: Health Care		<u>86.0</u>
Total		\$4,371.4

The Performance Audit Report revealed that the vast majority of sales tax exemptions are either:

- ✓ Legally required or
- ✓ In place so as to not tax goods at the wholesale or production level or
- ✓ Exempted purchases by government agencies to avoid the inefficiency of assessing tax to a government agency and then having that agency repay the tax.

Public Policy exemptions are in place to achieve goals such as stimulating business investment by not taxing machinery and equipment purchases or to further religious, charitable or benevolent causes and purposes.

At issue are groups who contend that activities engaged in by non-profit organizations (NPOs) have extended beyond their charitable and benevolent purposes to include activities that compete with for-profit businesses, resulting in the NPO's having an unfair economic advantage.

The Performance Audit recommended reviewing the process for naming exemptions to avoid the impression or appearance of favoritism. Rather than naming the organization being granted the exemption in the Statue, it was recommended exemptions are granted when an organization's purpose meets broad policy goals, such as exempting food purchases that provide for the indigent or needy.

**AFTERNOON SESSION:** Chris Courtwright presented a compilation of suggestions submitted by various organizations and changes they would like to see in the Kansas Tax Structure. The 54 suggestions were categorized into Property Tax, Sales Tax and Income Tax. Appended to each suggestion was the name of the organization making the request.

While the morning session was primarily a time of listening by Committee Members, the afternoon session was marked by the following comments from legislators:

- ✓ Questioned the terminology and concept of “Lost Revenues” in referring to funds exempt from taxation based on the principal that the funds belong first to the individual, not to the state. (Marvin Kleeb)
- ✓ Katrin Osterhaus acknowledged that this particular use of terminology was also a point of discussion by Legislative Post Audit (LPA) as it could too easily mislead the uninformed to erroneously conclude that the revenues were in fact lost (and therefore needed to be recouped) when in fact that is not the case. She was open to suggestions on how to better refer to funds exempted from taxation to achieve tax policy goals.
- ✓ Point made that KS was successful in maintaining a lower rate of unemployment relative to other states during the economic difficulties as a direct result of Kansas’ flexible tax structure and approach that created a business friendly climate through practice of granting tax credits. Proof is in the pudding. (Sharon Schwartz)
- ✓ The Kansas tax structure that is a combination of income and sales tax is robust, allowing the state to shape public policy goals and guide in responding to economic conditions.
- ✓ The present tax structure is flexible, competitive (with other states) and stable, meaning tax receipts were predictable with relative certainty.
- ✓ The exemptions are in place for a reason and have been fully vetted to achieve a coherent and equitable system of taxation. (Les Donovan)
- ✓ Concern about changing the tax structure from one financed by a combination of sources to simply one source could easily have unintended consequences that are impossible to quantify with relative accuracy such as lost revenue due to persons leaving Kansas to purchase good in another state at a lower rate.
- ✓ Eliminating income tax and migrating to a system where all tax revenues are based on spending is regressive and could impose undue hardship on households on a fixed income such as low income households or retirees.
- ✓ The current system achieves public policy goals, some of which if they were not provided could result in a greater cost to the state. (Donovan citing the case of volunteer physicians providing free services)
- ✓ Reluctance to have a knee-jerk reaction to the economic crash. Do not throw out the baby with the bathwater.
- ✓ At some point an increase in sales taxes results in diminished spending which could create the undesirable consequence of households cutting back on spending or traveling to lower taxing districts or pursuing internet purchases of products where taxes are not assessed at the point of sale.
- ✓ Concern about the impact of migrating to 100 percent sales tax structure could have on people and communities located next to neighboring states with a lower sales tax rate. Tax revenue that would otherwise be collectible could potentially be lost altogether if persons travel over the state line or on the internet.
- ✓ Changes to the tax structure must be those that bring about the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people rather than just benefiting a narrowly defined group.
- ✓ Care is needed in evaluating any changes to tax structure to ensure that suggested changes to tax structure are not motivated by self-serving interests.

Richard Carlson concluded the session by indicating more information was needed to address the issue adequately. LPA was requested to provide economic data of states that do not assess income tax to determine if the state had unique situations such as being Border States or a state with high tourism.

*Cynthia Wilson*

### **Johnson County Parks and Rec Board**

November 17 meeting

The Board took the following actions:

- Approved the proposed slate of candidates for officers for 2011
- Approved culling another 50 deer from Shawnee Mission Park, which will be accomplished by park employees who were trained as sharpshooters last year. A member of the public spoke in opposition to killing deer, but park personnel said the deer population was still too high, according to a Kansas Parks and Wildlife survey. Park officials stated that archery did not work well for culling. It requires closing sections of the park in daytime and is not as reliable as shooting,
- Discussed several actions in progress to address accounting and inventory problems identified by the internal audit.

*Ann Smith*

## **Olathe School Board** December 2 meeting

In addition to routine and customary business, the Board:

- Approved a Letter of Intent for the sale of Mill Creek Center.
- Heard a report on the status of the Strategic Plan 2011-2016. Focus groups have been conducted over the last few months. Data compilation found commonalities across all groups surveyed with much data supporting current strategic directions. The district's single greatest strength is perceived to be quality staff. The groups recommended that the district should focus on technology, academics/curriculum/instruction, and finances/budget in the next 3-5 years.
- Learned about the At Risk and Bilingual Weightings that are part of the school finance formula. These weightings are based on the free (not reduced) lunch count.
- Was briefed on concussion management in the Olathe Schools and received information on Second Impact Syndrome (SIS).
- Received the Budget Development Calendar for the 2011-2012 school year.
- Heard that in recent parent conferences: Elementary schools had over 98.4 percent participation, middle schools 79 percent, and high schools 69 percent.

*Connie Richards*

## **Shawnee Mission School Board** November 22 Meeting

- Board President Deb Zila stated they want the best schools in the state while they work within budget constraints, so there must be some give and take. Although some parents were upset with the administration's proposals, something needs to be done because the money is not there, and the Legislature is definitely going to be cutting more and interfering more in the future.
- Open Forum: Most of the 19 people who spoke were from SM South. These parents had been fairly quiet with a "wait and see attitude," but when the Board previously tabled some of the proposals, they were upset. They encouraged the board to "do the right thing" and pass the proposals as presented.
- Business: Re-adoption of Board Policy BB-School Board Legal Status (1st reading). Dr. King reported that Fashion Design and Construction 2 for 2011-2012 will accommodate the seven students to complete the two year program. Dr. Johnson stated that a Middle School Committee would be appointed to come up with ways to upgrade the curriculum, the facilities and strengthen the program. The committee would include administrators, teachers, students and parents.
- Board Comments: Dr. Denny stated that the board would provide guidance to the administration on these momentous decisions. Mention was made of the lawsuit Schools for Fair Funding. Legislators who worked to keep more equality in the state were almost all voted out of office at the November 2 election.
- Meeting was adjourned, but everyone was invited to stay for the Legislative Workshop with Dr. Stuart Little, the School Boards lobbyist, who presented the Legislative Platform for 2011.

## **Shawnee Mission School Board** December 13 Meeting

- Open Forum: Regarding school closing and boundary changes, 44 people spoke, both pro and con. The meeting started at 7 p.m. and adjourned at 11 p.m..
- Recommendation for Action: Superintendent Johnson presented Board Policy BB-School Board Legal Status (2nd reading) approved by the Board.
- Adoption of the 2011 Legislative Platform was approved.
- Resolution to close Don Bonjour Elementary School. Motion made and passed 7 to 0.
- Resolution to change the boundary of Brookwood Elementary School from SM East to SM South. Motion made and passed 5 to 2.
- Resolution to close Mission Valley Middle School. Motion made and passed 5 to 2.
- Resolution to close Antioch Middle School. Motion made and passed 6 to 1.
- Resolution for boundary changes for Ray Marsh and Broken Arrow with feeder path being Trailridge to SM Northwest. Motion made and passed 7 to 0.
- The board considered appeal of Student Expulsion E11-3. The Board approved the ruling as it stood.

*Virginia Johnson*

**Lenexa City Council** December 7 meeting

- The city of Lenexa routinely recognizes new Eagle Scouts from the community at the City Council meetings. Boy Scout Adam Moore was acknowledged by Mayor Boehm.
- A resolution was approved for the Mayor to execute an agreement with HTNB for the design work associated with the 87th Street Project from Pflumm Road to I-435. The intersection of Lackman and 87th Street was identified as an area that needs much work to make the intersection more functional while allowing good access to the Hen House strip mall. This work will not begin until the late fall or early spring of 2012.
- A One-Year Special Use Permit for Four Colonies Plaza to allow self-service storage, primarily commercial storage, located at 12001 W. 79th Street, was approved. However, two council members cast a "no" vote due to their constituent's concerns re. this property and past code violations.

*Sheri Potter*

**Wyandotte County Unified Government Commission** December 16 meeting

- The Mayor's Agenda consisted of a report from the Chairman of the Homeless Coalition about the first P.J. Day to raise funds for the Coalition.
- Under the Consent Agenda approval was given for the Plat of Oakwood Gardens Apts. to be developed at N. 32nd and Wood Ave. Also approval was given for 5 appointments to various boards.
- Standing Committees Agenda: Approval was given for the disbursement of Special Alcohol and Drug funds to three agencies. Also an Ordinance was adopted to impose a current fee of 5 percent gross revenues for video service providers in Kansas City, KS in lieu of the former cable television franchise process. This was adopted to comply with State Corporation Commission regulations.
- Administrator's Agenda: Approval was given for a contract with the International Association of Firefighters, Local No.64. This dealt with good-faith labor negotiations. Approval was given to set two public hearings for January 6, 2011 to establish financing tools to cover costs for a parking facility for Sporting KC.

*Pat Yingst and Marilyn Bynum*

**Johnson County Library Board** December 15 meeting

- Circulation was down in November 2010 in all categories, except Young Adult, which was up 20.7 percent.
- The new online catalog was rolled out earlier in December and 21,000 have already signed up.
- The new (energy efficient) addition to the Leawood Library has created more space and more traffic, but has reduced energy costs.
- The library is hiring an Information Specialist at the Oak Park Library who speaks Spanish.
- The Board approved a renewal of the agreement with Johnson County Community College for the Johnson County Adult Education Program.
- The Board approved the renewal of the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Olathe Public Library for automation, remote database access, and computer control and reservation services. Staff noted that the terms of the agreement need to be looked into in the coming year due to the increasing amount of time spent on issues with Olathe(i.e., the Olathe Library is getting a bargain at current rates.)

*Connie Richards*

## Recent U.S. Senate Votes

**Cloture Motion; Paycheck Fairness Act** - Vote **Rejected** (58-41, 1 Not Voting) The Senate fell short of the 60 votes needed to move forward on this bill that would require employers to demonstrate that any pay disparity between men and women is job-related and not gender-related. The future of the measure is unknown at this time.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **NO**      **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

**FDA Food Safety Modernization Act** - Vote **Passed** (73-25, 2 Not Voting) The Senate passed this bill to overhaul the nation's food safety rules. Shortly after passage, it was pointed out the bill contains revenue raising provisions and the constitution requires bills that raise revenue to originate in the House. At this time, the strategy to move the bill forward was unclear.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **Not Voting**      **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

[Cloture Motion, Defense Authorization Act](#) - Vote **Rejected** (57-40, 3 Not Voting) The Senate fell short of the 60 votes needed to move forward on this bill authorizing defense expenditures for the 2011 fiscal year. The bill included a provision that would have repealed the "don't ask, don't tell" law. The bill is unlikely to move forward if it includes the "don't ask" provision. This will be the first time in 49 years a defense authorization bill has not been cleared.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **Not Voting**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

[Middle Class Tax Relief Act of 2010](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (81-19) The Senate approved this bill extending the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts that were due to expire at the end of 2010 for another two years. The bill also extends unemployment benefits for 13 months. The House gave final approval to the measure several days later. The president signed the bill into law shortly after House passage.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **YES**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **YES**

[Cloture Motion; DREAM Act](#) - Vote **Rejected** (55-41, 4 Not Voting) The Senate fell short of the votes needed to move forward on this bill that would provide a path to legal status for certain undocumented children brought into the U.S. illegally by their parents.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **NO**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

[Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (65-31, 4 Not Voting) The Senate gave final approval to this bill repealing a 1993 law prohibiting homosexuals from serving openly in the military. The president lobbied for repeal and is expected to sign the bill into law.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **NO**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

[Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (79-16, 5 Not Voting) Congress agreed to this short-term spending bill that funds government operations at 2010 levels through March 4, 2011. The president signed the bill into law on December 22, 2010.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **Not Voting**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **YES**

[START Treaty Ratification](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (71-26, 3 Not Voting) The Senate ratified this treaty with Russia that would reduce the size of each country's nuclear arsenal by 30 percent.

**Sen. Sam Brownback** voted **Not Voting**    **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

## Recent U.S. House Votes

[Telework Improvements Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (254-152, 27 Not Voting) The House gave final approval to this bill that would require federal agencies to establish and implement a telework policy. The president is expected to sign the measure.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

[Emergency Unemployment Compensation Continuation Act](#) - Vote **Failed** (258-154, 22 Not Voting) The House rejected this bill that would have extended federal funding to states for long-term unemployment benefits. A two-thirds majority, or 275 votes, was needed to pass the bill under suspension. The future of the measure is unknown at this time.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

[Continuing Resolution](#) - Vote **Passed** (239-178, 16 Not Voting) The House passed a continuing resolution that funds government operations through December 18, 2010. This is the second CR since the 2011 fiscal year began on October 1, 2010. None of the annual spending bills have been completed yet. The Senate gave final approval to the resolution on December 2, 2010.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

[Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#) - Vote **Passed** (264-157, 13 Not Voting) The House gave final approval to this ten year, \$4.5 billion bill that would increase spending on child nutrition programs. The bill now goes to the president.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

[Censure of Rep. Charles B. Rangel \(D-NY\)](#) - Vote **Passed** (333-79, 21 Not Voting) The House voted to censure Rep. Charles B. Rangel (D-NY) for violating House ethics rules.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **NO**

[Continuing Resolution](#) - Vote **Passed** (212-206, 16 Not Voting) The House passed a long-term continuing resolution to fund government operations through the end of fiscal year 2011 at fiscal year 2010 levels. The overall funding would remain \$1.09 trillion, but billions of dollars in program funding would shift. The bill would also include an overhaul of food safety laws and expand Food and Drug Administration enforcement powers. It is unclear at this time whether the Senate will take up this measure. The current continuing resolution expires December 18, 2010.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

**DREAM Act** - Vote **Passed** (216-198, 20 Not Voting) The House passed this measure that would provide a path to legal status for certain undocumented children brought into the U.S. illegally by their parents. Before the vote, the House voted to replace the language of a bill further along in the legislative process with the language of the DREAM Act.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

**Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010** - Vote **Passed** (250-175, 9 Not Voting) The House passed this bill repealing a 1993 law prohibiting homosexuals from serving openly in the military. The Senate passed the bill several days later, clearing it for the president's signature.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

**Middle Class Tax Relief Act of 2010** - Vote **Passed** (277-148, 8 Not Voting) The House gave final approval to this bill extending the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts that were due to expire at the end of 2010 for another two years. The bill also extends unemployment benefits for 13 months. The president signed the bill into law later in the day.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

**FDA Food Safety Modernization Act** - Vote **Passed** (215-144, 74 Not Voting) The House gave final approval to this bill overhauling the Food and Drug Administration's regulatory authority. The Senate passed the bill by voice vote on December 19, 2010. The president is expected to sign the bill into law.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **YES**

**Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011** - Vote **Passed** (193-165, 75 Not Voting) Congress agreed to this short-term spending bill that funds government operations at 2010 levels through March 4, 2011. The president signed the bill into law on December 22, 2010.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **Not Voting**

**James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act** - Vote **Passed** (206-60, 168 Not Voting) Congress cleared this \$4.2 billion measure for the president that will reopen the Victim Compensation Fund and make payments to people exposed to toxic material at Ground Zero. The Senate passed the measure by voice vote earlier in the day. The president is expected to sign the bill into law.

**Rep. Dennis Moore** voted **Not Voting**

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF JOHNSON COUNTY  
9531 MEADOW LANE  
LEAWOOD KS 66206**

## Upcoming Events

<b>Saturday January 8</b>	<b>General Meeting:</b> 8:30 a.m. social time, 9 a.m. program, board meeting, 11 a.m.; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
<b>Friday January 21</b>	<b>Naturalization Ceremony:</b> Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5 <sup>th</sup> and State, Kansas City, KS
<b>Tuesday February 1</b>	<b>International Relations Committee Great Decisions:</b> 7 p.m. Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87 <sup>th</sup> Street, Overland Park, KS.
<b>Saturday February 5</b>	<b>General Meeting: “Politicians and Campaign Money: What’s Fair Disclosure?”</b> 8:30 a.m. social time, 9 a.m. program, board meeting, 11 a.m.; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
<b>Tuesday February 15</b>	<b>International Relations Committee Great Decisions:</b> 7 p.m. Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87 <sup>th</sup> Street, Overland Park, KS.
<b>Friday February 25</b>	<b>Naturalization Ceremony:</b> Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5 <sup>th</sup> and State, Kansas City, KS
<b>Thursday March 24</b>	<b>League Day at the Capitol</b>

The deadline for the February VOTER is January 15.