



VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County

How To Reach Us

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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, April 2 General Meeting Atonement Lutheran Church - 9948 Metcalf

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

SECRETS OF A CIVIL DISCOURSE

Moderator: State Senator Tim Owens, Overland Park,
Adjunct Professor of Government, Johnson County Community College.

Our Panelists

Mike Kautsch

former dean, KU School of Journalism and now professor on Media, Law and Policy in the KU School of Law.

John Douglass

Chief of Police, Overland Park, recognized nationally as a pioneer in outreach to minority communities.

Donna Lauffer

Johnson County Librarian,
and active in KC Consensus, which conducts "civility classes," among other efforts in engaging citizens in public policy.

We look forward to seeing you!



President's Message

March is Women's History Month. From First Lady Abigail Adams, we hear her advice to her husband “remember the ladies,” not just the prominent but the unsung heroes in the struggle for equality. Let us remember all the heroes, women and men alike, because legislation and funding are now threatening the future of some women and minorities in the name of fiscal austerity. My hope is to continue our efforts to contact our local and national leaders to register our disappointment with certain issues affecting our communities. We are proud of our League and celebrate the many contributions our members have made to our community.

March started out with a “bang” as our League was asked to assist on numerous candidate forums. We provided moderators and timekeepers to two forums before the primary and five forums after the primary. I wish to thank all who participated and to those who came to the rescue when a volunteer could not be there.

March includes the annual Sunshine Week National Dialogue. The National League along with Openthegovernment.org sponsored a webcast on “The Road Forward on Open Government” on March 18. Discussion focused on how President Obama's openness initiatives are being put into practice—from both a policy and a technical standpoint—and what we can and should expect the Administration to do to meet its goal. The League's efforts have helped citizens gain access to information as we work to put power back into the hands of the public.

I hope to see a large contingency of Johnson County League members attending the March 24 League Day at the Capitol. It promises to be an exciting day, with a presentation on redistricting in Kansas in the morning session. The afternoon session will be the wrap-up and celebration of our Quest for a More Diverse Judiciary project. Even though our League has one more project to complete on May 3, we will celebrate the many projects through out the state that have seen success.

Harriett Anderson

Voter Services

As always, the Voter Services committee has been busy. We continue to work with the Johnson County Community College Video Production Department to co-sponsor candidate forums for the JCCC Board of Trustee positions. We were also asked to assist in forums around Johnson County for the Shawnee Mission School Board, Olathe School Board and Blue Valley School Board positions. The League's assistance in these areas continues to promote a more informed voter.

A big thanks to those who have assisted with these forums this Spring and in the past. There is no way the League could continue to be such a valuable community resource in this area without League members willing to participate.

Jodie Dietz, Voter Services

To view candidate forums for JCCC Trustees, go to <http://video.jccc.edu>, then scroll down for 2011 Candidates Forum.

JCCC Board of Trustees Candidates

[Board of Trustees](#) - James Nelson, Ron Platt, and Doug Wood

[Board of Trustees](#) - Richard Schroder, Jon Stewart, and Don Weiss

[Board of Trustees](#) - Greg Musil and Richard Van Buskirk

Making Democracy Work Award

All League Members are invited to attend our Making Democracy Work Award Luncheon immediately following the JoCo LWV Annual Meeting on May 7, 2011. The cost of the catered luncheon is \$15 per person. The deadline to make reservations is **April 22**. Please mail your check to: **JoCo League of Women Voters; P.O. Box 13491; Overland Park, KS 66282**. You may also make a reservation by contacting Carisa De Anda (cdeanda4@gmail.com or 913 406 8709) before the deadline and plan to pay at the door.

The Johnson County League of Women Voters created the Making Democracy Work Award to recognize an outstanding community leader who has:

- Served the public sector or community for at least 5 years
- Exhibited honesty and integrity
- Made a difference in the community
- Kept promises made to others and the community
- Has a proven she/he is a highly principled individual

The League congratulates our 2011 Making Democracy recipient, **Annabeth Surbaugh**. Annabeth was a stay-at-home mom who joined the League 25 years ago after a neighbor recommended she get informed and involved in the community. She eventually became a citizen activist in Overland Park. Annabeth then served on the Johnson County Board of Commissioners for 18 years, eight years of which she was the publicly-elected chairperson. Her participation on the Board included many accomplishments that were "citizen-focused" including issues such as taxes and public transportation. She also was an early supporter of sustaining the environment, in which she says she was "green before green was cool."

Carisa de Anda

Board Briefs March 5 meeting

- Harriet Duff reported receiving 19 student essays from eight different schools in five different districts. The committee will evaluate the essays and notify students of the winner on April 1.
- Carisa De Anda, chair of the May 7 luncheon, reported Kansas City Catering will provide the food and one server. The Making Democracy Work program will be at 10:30 followed by the luncheon. Cost is \$15.
- The Board adopted the 2011-12 budget presented by Nancy Martin, chair, of the Budget Committee.
- Candy Birch presented the letter to be sent to middle schools announcing the League's Judicial Diversity program for students. Ann Etter, Government chair, announced a Law Day at the Johnson County Court House on May 3, 5 – 9 p.m. The League can use the remainder of our national grant funds to subsidize transportation and box suppers for middle school students and parents to attend the court's Law Day. Each middle school will receive a limited number of vouchers.
- Susan Horst, Membership co-chair, introduced five visitors; two became members. Total membership is 141.
- President Harriett Anderson called for volunteers for the Hospitality Committee.

Polly Swafford

International Relations Committee

The League's Great Decisions discussion group meets on the first and third Tuesdays in the double meeting room of the Central Resource Library from 7 to 8:30 p.m. The topics for the remaining five meetings are: Germany Ascendant, Responding to the Financial Crisis, Sanctions and Nonproliferation, the Caucasus, and Global Governance. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Nan Wilson (ndwilson@primary.net).

Nan Wilson

Let's Talk Issues

Let's Talk Issues is a cable television program on the educational channel produced by Johnson County Community College and co-sponsored by JCCC, *The Kansas City Star* and the League of Women Voters of Johnson County. These programs are initially live broadcasts with re-broadcasts at selected times during the following weeks from JCCC website at <http://video.jccc.edu/>. If you have Time Warner cable channels, you will find the program on Channel 17 at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 6.

The topic for the April 6 program is; "Johnson County: Environmental Changes and Challenges."

Harriett Anderson

Membership

Please welcome new members Karen Wulfkuhle, Patricia A. Circle, and Donna Clark. Please introduce yourselves to them at our meetings. Keep up the good work and keep bringing in prospective members.

Nancy Gatz and Susan Horst

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 p.m. 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). Please mark your calendar for the upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies.

- March 25* Court off-site
- April 29 Judge Carlos Murguia
- May 27* Court off-site
- June 24 Magistrate Judge Gerald L. Rushfelt

*Kim Leininger, Division Manager for the Clerk's office had told us that our volunteers were not needed to be involved at the off-site ceremonies; however, she called recently and asked if we would help with the March ceremony at Leavenworth Naturalization Ceremony as she had not been able to find anyone to help with registering the new citizens. I contacted my committee and most were available for that date. Then I checked with Harriett Anderson, and she felt that any time and anywhere we can make people aware of the League of Women Voters and their work is a positive thing. So we will be attending this ceremony on March 25.

Kim Leininger also asked if we would consider going to Fort Scott on May 27. We have not decided yet, but if it can be worked out, I would like for us to participate. These ceremonies are being held off-site because of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Kansas statehood.

Virginia Johnson

Spring Election

Spring General Election- April 5

Johnson County voters in the following districts will elect candidates for office:

- **City Officials:** Election of Mayor and/or Council Members in the cities of Bonner Springs, De Soto, Edgerton, Fairway, Gardner, Lake Quivira, Lenexa, Merriam, Mission Hills, Mission Woods, Olathe, Overland Park, Prairie Village, Roeland Park, Spring Hill, and Westwood Hills.
- **School Districts:** Blue Valley, De Soto, Eudora, Gardner Edgerton, Olathe, Shawnee Mission, Spring Hill, and Wellsville
- **Johnson County Community College Trustees**
- **Water District #1 of Johnson County**
- **Merriam Drainage District Board of Directors**
- **Monticello Drainage District Board of Directors**

Your Sample Ballot

Go to www.jocoelection.org, click Voter Lookup, then enter your name and birthdate. You will find a list of the districts in which you live. Scroll to the end and click on Sample Ballot to view the options on your April 5 ballot.

1600+ Magnets and Counting!

Johnson County's new solid waste regulations start in just 8 months. In support of the Johnson County Environmental Department, LWVJC has 27 participants helping to spread the word.

The county appreciates our help. "It is so great to hear that your board approved [the outreach plan] and that there were so many volunteers," wrote the Environmental Department's Julie Coon on 1/12/2011. Many thanks to the three levels of volunteers:

Presenters to groups, boards: Candy Birch, Dolores Furtado, Elaine Giessel, Bob Jefferis, Ellen Miller, Jill Quigley, Ed Rowe and Ann Sanders. The county will provide them with talking points and a PowerPoint.

Magnet/flyer distributors: Sandy Ackerson, Ann Arnott, Jodie Dietz, Milli Hogens, Ann Norbury, Jill Quigley, Ed Rowe, Myrna Stringer, Polly Swafford, Nan Wilson, Karin Winn and Betty Wyckoff. Are they busy? Yes! As of early March:

- Over 1600 magnets distributed (425 alone to one elementary school)
- Over 1200 flyers distributed
- Groups contacted include churches, homeowners associations, civic group boards, Rotary, environmental clubs, etc.

Manning tables at fairs, events: Edys Cacy, Jodie Dietz, Jan Durrett, Virginia Johnson, Anita Kaiser, Ann Norbury, Ed Rowe, Polly Swafford, Karin Winn and Betty Wyckoff. So far, county staff has been able to handle the Spring events.

For the rest of 2011, this joint activity of the Natural Resources Committee and Advocacy program will continue. The new solid waste regulations offer a major opportunity for LWVJC to inform our community – and to be visible. Special thanks go to Elaine Giessel for her ideas and help.

ALERT: If you can pitch in, please contact Ellen Miller, ellen3147@gmail.com. County staff would like to get magnets and flyers to virtually every household before 1/1/2012—and LWVJC can help!

Ellen Miller

Come to Convention 2011

"New Horizons LWVK"

On Saturday, April 30, Leaguers from around Kansas will gather in Emporia for the State Convention. The event will be held at the Guesthouse Inn, 2700 W. 18th Ave. from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The agenda will include opportunities to elect officers; choose a new study; and network with others about what is happening in each of your Leagues. Everyone has had some important successes this year to share, and everyone will benefit when we celebrate our wealth of wisdom and experience with each other.

Speakers:

- Pat Donath, LWVUS Liaison "Advocacy Priorities and the 'Watch' List"
- Blake West, President of KNEA – "Education – the Good, Bad, and the Ugly"
- Chris Harvel, Director of Facilities and Infrastructure, Emporia School District - "Technology – from Broadband to Facebook"

We hope to have representation from all Leagues, and we want everyone to leave Convention with a greater appreciation of what League is and does.

Convention registration details (\$50 registration fee) will be in the upcoming April *LWV KANSAS VOTER*. I hope to see many of you in Emporia. You will be glad you came.

Diane Kuhn, vice-president LWV-Kansas

League Needs Equipment Manager

Thanks to Bob Jefferis, who has faithfully brought the PA equipment to our monthly League meetings and set up the speakers and microphones. Everything fits on a two-wheeled cart for easy transport. Bob has announced that he is retiring from this duty. If you would be willing to assume this job, please contact Bob Jefferis (631-4441, jeffbobj@everestkc.net) or Harriett Anderson (hjanderson@kc.rr.com, 422-7704).

Member Spotlight: Ann Sanders, Ph.D.

Ann Sanders often speaks of a “guardian angel” helping her along her pathway. She says, “I’ve long been interested in the political process to insure equity to all segments of society. I’ve been blessed and recognized throughout my life.”

Sanders grew up in Independence, Kansas and always liked “the game called school.” She excelled at that “game” also and was the first African-American to be selected Salutatorian of her community college graduating class.

She decided to become a teacher and enrolled at Pittsburg State University. Her major was American History, with a minor in English.



“The Sixties and Seventies were an exciting time to be in college,” says Ann. “This was the civil rights era, and businesses in Pittsburg would not hire minority students. I participated in organizing a non-violent protest in which our group of students went to various stores and gathered up non-perishable goods for purchase. But at the check out counter, students would say, ‘Oh, I forgot my check book’ and walk out without the goods. Store owners got the message and the next month started hiring minority students.”

Still the University did not recognize the Black Student Movement as an official student organization and thus be eligible for funding provided to student groups. Sanders went with a delegation of student leaders to speak with the university president and the Student Government, and then the school did recognize the group.

Upon graduation, the college recognized her as Female Outstanding Graduating Senior based on grade point average and civic involvement. Her name is on a gold brick in the university’s Gold Brick Walkway.

After graduating with a Masters Degree from Pittsburg, Sanders taught for 15 years in the Shawnee Mission School District. She decided to go into administration, so she earned her Ph.D. from Kansas University. In 1970 she and her husband Mike were married. They have two daughters, Tara Ann and Theresa Annette.

Ann was hired as Assistant Principal of Blue Valley North High School. Her “guardian angel” was with her because within seven months, the Blue Valley District selected her as one of their first two women high school principals and the first African American principal. She worked for Blue Valley for six years and then moved to the Olathe School District. Sanders became Director of Senior High Curriculum and Instruction, supervising all aspects of the four high schools.

In 2002 Pittsburg State University chose her for their Clyde U. Phillips Award for Outstanding Administrator. That same year, Kathryn Sommer’s book, *Power of Her Own*, about 50 outstanding women in Kansas, included Ann Sanders.

“Watching national presidential debates,” Ann says, “I admired the role of the League of Women Voters and decided to join the Johnson County League. I love to learn.”

Elected JCLWV President in 2003, Ann initiated the Making Democracy Work Award. Among the accomplishments during her term, the League membership pin was adopted. With Diane Kuhn’s mentorship, she created a monthly calendar of events, a timeline for the president, and reenergized the Speaker’s Bureau with increased involvement by the membership.

For the League’s 2011- 2012 year, the Nominating Committee has proposed Ann Sanders for First Vice President. Her primary responsibility would be as Program Chair.

In 2007, Ann moved to Baker University. She has developed and is teaching a course, Program Planning & Evaluation. Her class, comprised of Ph.D. students, evaluate educational programs.

Presently Sanders is chair of the North Central Quality Assurance Review and leads a team to evaluate schools. Her most recent recognition is the M. Clardine Johnson Award for outstanding contribution to ensuring educational excellence.

Ann Sanders has told her daughters, “To whom much is given, much is expected.” With thanks to her “guardian angel,” she continues to give much to the community in her pursuit of working to achieve excellence and equity for all members of society.

Polly Swafford

Fair and Diverse Judiciary

In September 2009, we submitted a grant proposal to National for \$18,000 in grant money to promote a More Diverse Judiciary. In December 2009, we received a letter awarding LWVJoCo \$5,600. We have fulfilled our promise to man booths at fall festivals and to host an event at the Central Resource Library. Our next and final project is to encourage diverse students to aspire to the profession.

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County has taken on an ambitious project to help young people learn how **diversity in the judiciary** is essential in good government.

As recent Supreme Court appointments have brought into the spotlight, courts that include women, African-American, Latinos, Asians and other ethnicities help promote justice and judicial impartiality as well as confidence in the judiciary.

The bench in most courts is overwhelmingly populated with white males, while many defendants represent a wide range of minorities, ages, and socio-economic status. Only 17 percent of the 265 judges in Kansas are women even though 50 percent of law school graduates are female. Only 1.5 percent are African American and 1.5 percent are Latino. There is only one Asian judge and no Native American judges. A fair and diverse judiciary is critical and should reflect the community it serves.

But judges just don't happen. First, they need to graduate from high school with grades and ability good enough to be accepted and to succeed in college. After those 4-5 years, 3 years of law school follow. Judges must serve as lawyers for a period of time, usually at least 3 years, to qualify for judgeships at any level.

With this timeline, it makes sense to work backward and to begin informing young people in middle school about this career path and encouraging them to pursue an academic path that will make a judgeship possible.

We are planning a spring event to do just that. Cooperating with the Johnson County Bar Association, the League of Women Voters of Johnson County will sponsor students and their parents to participate in **Law Day on Tuesday, May 3, 2011, from 5 to 9 p.m.**

We have asked the superintendents of our six Johnson County school districts to ask teachers to select strong female students as well as male and female students who are Asian, African-American, Hispanic, or other ethnicities and who have potential to succeed in the legal profession. Once selected, we will then send invitations to be distributed to those students and their parents that will encourage them to attend Law Day. **LWV JoCo will pay for all or part of the transportation and also provide a light dinner for those who attend.** LWV JoCo will reimburse each school district **up to \$400** to help defray transportation costs.

We look forward to strong participation of at least 200 in this opportunity. The Middle School Diversity committee members are Ann Etter, chair; Carissa DeAnda, Candy Birch.

Candy Birch

Preparation for Annual Meeting

According to JoCo League bylaws, items to be voted on at the May 7 Annual Meeting must be published in the April VOTER. This gives League members 30 days notice.

Please review the following items, printed on the next pages: By-Law Change, Nominations of Officers and Board, and the 2011-2012 Budget.

By-Law Change

Change in by-laws: **ARTICLE III Membership (Remove the word honorary)**
Sec. 2. Types of Membership.

A. *Voting Members.* Citizens at least 18 years of age who join the League shall be voting members of local Leagues, state Leagues and of the LWVUS; (1) individuals who live within an area of a local League may join that League or any other local League; (2) those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be state members-at-large; (3) those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be **(honorary)** life members excused from the payment of dues.

Nominations for 2011-2012

The nominating committee of the Johnson County League of Women Voters, in accordance with League's by-laws, nominates the following candidates for office for next year:

- President-elect Paula Schwach, one-year term
- 1st Vice President Ann Sanders, two-year term
- Secretary Edna Baginsky, two-year term

The following have been selected to serve a two-year term on the board of directors:

- Government Ann Etter
- International Relations Nancy Martin
- Observer Corps Jodie Dietz

Nominating committee for 2012: Harriett Anderson (*chair*) and Diane Kuhn, Pat Lanser
(*The 2011-2012 board will appoint two additional members in the fall.*)

*2011 Nominating Committee
Candy Birch, Gwynne Lee, Pat Lanser*

Note: Officers for 2011-2012 include those previously elected: Harriet Duff as president and Candy Birch as treasurer.

League of Women Voters of Johnson County 2011-2012 Proposed Budget

INCOME

Dues:

28	Household membership @41.25 each	1,155.00
71	Individual membership @55.00 each	3,905.00
0	Student membership	0.00
19	Supporting membership @75.00 each	1,425.00
9	Sustaining membership @\$100.00 each	900.00
9	Honorary membership @ no charge	0.00
136	Total	7,385.00

Contributions:

Member contributions	200.00
Non-member contributions	
Honorarium and memory contributions	
Total	200.00

Miscellaneous:

Gifts in Kind (non cash)	
Miscellaneous	
Total	0.00

Transfer from Reserves 10,886.80

TOTAL INCOME 18,471.80

EXPENSE

Operating:

Supplies, Stationery, Misc.	0.00
Telephone - Google Voice	0.00
Post Office Box Rental	60.00
Website domain	80.00
Miscellaneous	0.00
Total	140.00

Administrative:

President and Board	50.00
Membership	500.00
State Corporation fee	60.00
Financial Review	50.00
Total	660.00

Delegates and Travel:

State meetings	250.00
National Council/Convention 2012	2,000.00
Total	2,250.00

LWV Financial Support:

State PMP (18.00 each)	2,448.00
National PMP (29.80 each)	4,052.80
LWV JC Donation to 2020	136.00
Total	6,636.80

Service and Information:

Voter Services/Candidate Forums	40.00
Election 2012	5,000.00
Contributions to other groups	150.00
Total	5,190.00

Publications:

Annual Meeting Book	150.00
Brochures	0.00
Other Handbooks	0.00
Local Position Handbook	0.00
VOTER, publishing	225.00
VOTER, postage	180.00
Total	555.00

Meeting and Studies:

Programs and Studies	450.00
Equipment	315.00
General/Unit meetings, refreshments	100.00
Church facilities	500.00
Total	1,365.00

Events:

Wine and Cheese	250.00
Holiday Party	100.00
Making Democracy Work Luncheon	650.00
Essay Contest	1,050.00
Total	2,050.00

TOTAL EXPENSES 18,471.80

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

Johnson County WaterOne Board March 8 meeting (www.waterone.org)

- No RFQ for \$435,900 contract. Departing from normal practice, the board approved a sole source contract for software services. The 12-16 week contract with long-time consultant CyberTech will provide functional and technical support for upgrades to SAP software. Board Policy #27 states that “services in excess of \$25,000 require the RFP process.” The waiver was based on issues including continuing the vendor’s high quality, cost effective IT services rather than breaking in a new company.
- \$40 round trip fee changed. Effective March 15, 2011, customers will pay \$20 per trip for employees to connect or disconnect water service due to unpaid bills. Often only a note is left saying that the customer has 24 hours to pay up and the water is left on. Most customers do pay their bill within 24 hours. But for those who don’t, it means another employee trip to disconnect. The fee change lets WaterOne recover the actual cost of service.

Ellen Miller

Johnson County Library Board March 16 meeting

- The Friends of the Library Summer Book Sale will be June 8-11. Over 250 volunteers will be needed for the sale.
- Overall library circulation was down 8 percent in February. The Blue Valley Branch had the largest positive increase with a gain of 6.5 percent.
- The Board reaffirmed the following General Guiding Principles as the library staff prepares its 2012 budget request, which includes a \$700,000 reduction: Achieve staff reductions without layoffs; Reduce overall size of the whole core library program rather than removing individual programs; Limit impact to the public to provide the broadest service; and Keep neighborhood service intact as much as possible.
- In 2010, the library circulated about 7 million items and had 3.7 million web visits.

Connie Richards

Shawnee Mission School Board February 28 meeting

- District Highlights: Recognition of the Middle School Facilities Committee which consisted of 33 members made up of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and interested members of the community. Superintendent Gene Johnson formed this committee after the community voiced concerns during the closing of two middle schools in the fall. Jennifer Griffith, principal of Apache Elementary School, presented a power point presentation of the school's activities and programs. One of the programs was Building Healthy Kids through education as to diet, exercise (PE night) and using activities that were fun, but instructional.
- Open Forum: Kathy Cook spoke about concerns for overcrowding at Hocker Grove Middle School next year due to transferring students from the two middle schools that were closed, possible portable classrooms, poor communication, and teachers feeling threatened by the administration.
- Proclamations: Board approved National Music in Our Schools Month, National Youth Art Month, National Theatre in Our Schools Month and School Social Work Week.
- Board Comments: Cindy Neighbor spoke about the Governor's proposed budget and the possible cuts to art, music, and theater which would limit student growth and development; also the cutting of social workers who deal with students' mental health. The second SMSD Legislative Information Series was held on March 3.

Virginia Johnson

Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees February 17 meeting

- A reception sponsored by the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees was held in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 15. Attendees included Rep. Yoder and 19 of his staffers, plus Jerry Moran, Pat Roberts and members of their staffs. Trustee Michelson described it as “the best in my six years of attending,” and further stated he felt that the level of access and appreciation with these political leaders has been elevated since the arrival of President Calaway and by the efforts of lobbyist Dick Carter.
- JCCC Foundation. The next event in the Visiting Chef series will feature Michael Smith of the restaurants “Michael Smith” and “Extra Virgin.”
- A retirees association (of former employees of JCCC) has been formed.
- Discussions between JCCC and representatives of the Brown and Gold Club continue.

Ann Arnott

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) February 10 meeting

- Appointments to several County Boards included that of Cindy Neighbor (League member), appointed as the 2nd District representative on the County Mental Health Governing Board.
- Business agenda:
 - A resolution was passed that would reclassify land at 181st and Nall as a Rural District. It had previously been classified as Planned Low Density – which allows more homes to be built on smaller lots than is allowed with the Rural designation.
 - A Public Hearing was held to discuss implementation of sewer system repairs/upgrades as a means of improving flood control in the Brush Creek water shed (NE Johnson County) and Turkey Creek water shed. Work done on private property will be fully reimbursed if the home owner selects their own plumbing company rather than choosing one contracted by the County. No member of the public spoke, and the Resolution passed.
- County Manager's Report:
 - The BOCC approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Kansas City, MO regarding a Homelessness Task Force. The plan is to address immediate and long term strategies and funding options associated with the homeless in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. Other participating counties are: Jackson, Clay, Platte, and Wyandotte.
 - The BOCC had previously approved setting aside \$4.5 million from General Fund Reserves for land acquisition for a new court house. Since no action on land acquisition had occurred at the end of 2010, the funds will be reclassified back into General Fund Reserves.
 - A website developed by the Johnson County Museum in partnership with the Johnson County Library has been selected by the Institute of Museum and Library Services as a model for other institutions creating digital history collections. Johnson County's entry was one of six chosen from an applicant pool of several thousand. Check it out at www.JoCoHistory.net.
Observer's note: Mindy Love, Exec. Director of the Museum, spoke at our September 2010 meeting. Many of League's archives, thanks to the hard work of Diane Kuhn, Nan Wilson and others, are part of the county's history!
- Legislative Report:
 - The Governor's recommended budget for the 2012 fiscal year contains a total of \$24million in cuts that will affect Johnson County agencies.
 - Among numerous bills introduced thus far that would affect the County:
 - Appointing County Election commissioners by the respective County Commission, rather than appointment by the Secretary of State.
 - Placing term limits on County Commissioners
 - Allowing parents to opt out of childhood vaccinations, based on personal beliefs
 - More restrictive sanctions for DUI offenders

Janis McMillen

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) February 24 meeting

- Public Comments: Two Overland Park men presented a Long Term Waste Management Proposal that had a biogas conversion plan that would convert solid waste to methane to gasoline with very little cost by adding a ten cent tax per week on each household.
- Consent Agenda: Three items: 1) an amendment to agreement with Overland Park for Phase 2 flood warning implementation and management services. 2) Advisory Council would consider accepting a US Geological Survey grant for funding stream gauging and water quality. 3) RFP No.2010-070 to grant awards to groups working on water quality education .
- Action Agenda: Consider adopting the County's 2011 Federal Legislative Platform. Board suggested cutting some of the mandated programs since there will be cuts in funding and to request capitalizing on the programs that the county has had success in implementing.
- Management Reports: (1) proper notification for request seeking ownership list (2) realignment of 191st Street/4 Corners Road (3) ongoing work on the Burlington Northern Project (4) stopping paper transcript because of the video of all meetings being available. Discussion focused on how long these videos would be kept, with a recommendation for more information (6) Olathe hearing regarding revenue bonds for an office and warehouse (7) County Manager, co-chair for the committee dealing with Homeland Security, will send a letter to the Senate concerning continuing funds for any emergencies in the area.
- Legislative Update: Nine House bills and three Senate bills were submitted for the Board's information.
- 2011 Revaluation Report: Outlook for 2011 as to reappraisals and sales questionnaire showed a slight increase in new construction and a drop in foreclosures. It was believed the downturn had bottomed out and was showing an

upswing in building in the county as to multi-family dwellings; warehousing and retail sales would be the last to rebound.

- Special Public Building Commission Agenda: RFP authorizing amendment to the contract with JE Dunn Construction Company of bid package B for the Olathe Adult Detention Center Expansion and Remodeling for \$20,288,955.
- Meeting in recess; then reconvened to hear Resolution No.005-11 and Application No. NW-CU-2988 for considering request for a conditional use permit for a church and residential quarters for staff on approximately 14 acres (located at 29600 West 119th Street) zoned Rural District.

Virginia Johnson

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) March 3 meeting

- A Public Hearing was held to authorize the county to submit its report of the 2010 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs and the Home Investment Partnerships program. These programs are funded by a federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant. Reports from several of the individual agency recipients were presented, and included homelessness, housing, public facilities and public services.

Johnson County Parks and Rec – scholarships were provided to low income families for their children to participate in activities during the summer. Through the 2010 grant, 33 children and families were able to participate.

SafeHome reported on a striking increase in domestic violence in 2010, resulting in instituting a “Lethality Assessment” tool to more effectively screen and provide short term housing (sleeping on floors or couches at their facility) for victims of domestic violence who are in immediate threat. The number of women and children in this very high-risk category was the greatest number seen in at least 18 years, and comprised 21 percent of the women served by SafeHome.

United Community Services reported that 38,000 Johnson Countians lived in poverty during 2010. This ranked our county second only to Sedgwick Co. in the number of residents living in poverty. One in 10 residents living in poverty were under age 25. In 2009, among 210 families in poverty, 69 were children. In 2010, among 315 families living in poverty, 170 were children. During the January, 2011 “point-in time” count of homeless living in the metro area, it revealed 21,000 homeless persons in Johnson County.

Johnson County Developmental Supports provides a variety of resources that allow developmentally disabled (intellectually, emotionally and physically) persons to live in a home by providing a variety of assistive technology devices and doing remodeling to provide barrier-free housing. There are currently 362 persons with serious mobility issues who are on the waiting list for accessible housing.

Olathe Community Housing and *Johnson County Housing Services* representatives also spoke to their efforts to help maintain housing for low-income residents.

- Approved attaching 80 acres of “real” property from Johnson County into Rural Water District No. 2 of Miami County to provide water services to this land, allowing land owners access to water for future development.
- Approved consolidating administrative functions of the Board of County Commissioners with administrative functions of the County Administration Department, all reporting to the County Manager. Previously the administrative functions of the Board reported to the Board of County Commissioners. This consolidation will result in cost savings for the county.
- The Commission on Aging recommended that Senior Quest be suspended this year, due to financial reasons.

Janis McMillen

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) March 10 meeting

- Public Comments: A citizen from the unincorporated area challenged (for the second time) the Commission's January decision to eliminate transcripts of Board retreats. The person requested information showing how each of the Commissioners voted on this decision. The County Manager replied that BOCC retreats, which are subject to the Kansas Open Meetings Act and Kansas Open Records Act, are open to the public, just as are the Commission meetings each week.
- The Juvenile Corrections Advisory Board requested that the BOCC approve submission of a Prevention and Graduated Sanctions Block Grant Application for 2012. Funds in the amount of \$1,561,908 would be used to develop: 1) case management, intensive supervision, and court intake services for Juvenile Offenders, and 2) juvenile intake and assessment including Children In Need of Care and Juvenile offenders. The Board approved the request, noting that this fiscal year, Johnson County's highest priority program for Juvenile Offenders, the Youth Court program, had been cut by over \$200,000.

- The Board discussed future transportation needs for senior citizens and especially those seniors with mobility impairments. The Board agreed to consider applying for a Community Development Block Grant to augment further discussion and planning around these transportation needs.

Janis McMillen

Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees January 27 meeting

- President's report: Dr. Calaway addressed the need to cut \$6.2 million from the budget. Proposed measures include the following: *A hiring freeze for the remainder of the year. * Outsourcing of some service. *A suspension of "non-mission critical" positions and issues, i.e. video taping of monthly B of T meetings (audio will be available for a minimal fee). Dr. Calaway used this as an example of "this cost savings equals a faculty position," and the overall goal is not to cut staff, but to maintain the school's core mission--quality education.
- College lobbyist report: The new crop of legislators want to "reduce, dismantle and take apart," but it is too soon to see how this will play out for education.
- Committee reports and recommendations - Rebranding the college: After considerable discussion, an expenditure of up to \$120,000 was approved for consulting services for this purpose. It has been at least a decade since this topic has been examined. The feeling was that many benefits of JCCC are not well known. While increased awareness of JCCC may be particularly important in today's economic climate, this should be viewed as a long term investment, beneficial outwardly (attracting new partners) and inwardly (the students).
- Brown and Gold Club - (JCCC-affiliated club for Johnson County seniors): Under "Petitions and Communications," two members of the recently-dissolved Board of Directors of this club spoke, asking for the officers to be reinstated and stating that they had not received a requested letter formally giving reasons for the dissolution. President Calaway explained the reasons for the dissolution. Primarily it is disagreements with the travel portions of the activities. Examples included: *Leaving members behind on some trips; *Trips having no educational aspect; *A hostile relationship with JCCC staff working with the club; *A feeling emanating from the club officers that they had no reporting responsibility to JCCC itself; and a host of policies not in conformance with JCCC. Calaway felt it was not necessary to send a formal letter as these issues had been discussed at length in person.

Ann Arnott

Johnson County Community College February 17 meeting:

- A reception sponsored by the Kansas Association of Community College Trustees was held in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 15. Attendees included Rep. Yoder and 19 of his staffers, plus Jerry Moran, Pat Roberts and members of their staffs. Trustee Michelson described it as "the best in my six years of attending," and further stated he felt that the level of access and appreciation with these political leaders has been elevated since the arrival of President Calaway and by the efforts of lobbyist Dick Carter.
- JCCC Foundation. The next event in the Visiting Chef series will feature Michael Smith of the restaurants "Michael Smith" and "Extra Virgin."
- A retirees association (of former employees of JCCC) has been formed.
- Discussions between JCCC and representatives of the Brown and Gold Club continue.

Ann Arnott

Olathe School Board March 3 meeting

- Heard an update on technology. The district employs 41 people who work in technology, taking care of 10,600 computers, 2100 digital classrooms, 1680 wireless access points, 70 servers, 200+ switches and routers, 3800 phones, and 32,326 network users.
- Authorized the sale of Qualified School Construction Bonds for work on Havencroft, Washington, and California Trail school additions.
- Adopted a plan to make up snow days by adding 13 minutes to the high school day (starting after spring break). Elementary and middle schools have enough hours in their school day to cover all six snow days.
- Learned about the following school finance formula components: Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), Court of Tax Appeals (COTA), and New Facilities Weighting.

Connie Richards

Lenexa City Council February 8 meeting

- Mandy Stuke was sworn in as new Ward 4 council member to replace Cindy Greene, who resigned to work as District Director for Senator Jerry Moran's office.
- Lenexa Fire department presented a Citizen and Canine Recognition award to Sharon Bowen and her dog, Tootsie, who are credited with saving the lives of a family of five during a house fire the morning of December 30, 2010.
- All items on the Consent Agenda were approved including a resolution approving an annual operation and maintenance assurance statement with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.
- Animal Haven has a new director and the city's contract with Animal Haven, which was written in 1998, will be updated. The council approved a resolution setting certain fees regarding animals and animal control.
- A review of the December 31, 2010 Quarterly Financial Report was presented. The general funds are better than projected due mainly to the fact that sales tax have come in higher than projected, up 2 percent. Property values remain down and are projected to be down for 2012. Property tax revenues are down by 5 percent. Building permits, both residential and commercial, are on the rise.
- The city currently has approximately 25 major projects either under design or under construction. Winter weather issues have delayed some of these projects. Projects include: Flat Rock Creek pool closed for improvements, to re-open Spring 2012; intersection of Lackman and 79th Street under design for a new traffic signal and addressing flooding issues; and Blackhoof Park phase II improvements under construction.

Sheri Potter

Lenexa City Council March 1 meeting

- Approved a resolution affirming the Neighborhood Revitalization District Program in Lenexa. Through this program, grants and rebates have been provided for 53 applicants.
- Lou Serrone and Amy Slater, council members from Ward 3, invited Eric Wade, City Administrator, to attend the Greystone Home Owner's Association meeting recently to address trash and related issues. They commended Mr. Wade on his presentation.
- Council member Andy Huckaba recently participated in a webinar for the National League of Cities Information Technology and Communications Committee. Mr. Huckaba is the chair for the ITCC. The National League of Cities strengthens and promotes cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance.
- Matt Shatto, Deputy City Administrator, has been with the city of Lenexa for 5 1/2 years but will be leaving to take the job of City Administrator for North Kansas City. Mr. Shatto commended the council members for their ongoing professionalism. The position has 219 applicants.
- Steve Shooley, Lenexa Transportation Manager, reported on traffic signalization. Currently Lenexa has 67 signalized intersections. Mr. Shooley discussed the use of various detection technologies. He stressed the importance of traffic signal coordination as this increases traffic flow, decreases delays, and improves air quality. The 87th Street Parkway, 95th Street, Quivira, and College are "coordination corridors" and Lackman is under consideration. Work is underway to improve and enhance the system on the 95th Street corridor.

Sheri Potter

Wyandotte County Unified Government Commission

- Planning and Zoning: The Preliminary Plan Review for senior housing at 3845 S. Thompson to be built by City Vision Ministries was sent back to the Planning Commission. This 48-unit apartment complex is next to the Mission Cliff Development, and the owners of these homes were against this development. Amendment was passed.
- Public Hearing: Two separate projects were considered:
 - 1) 39th and Rainbow Development Project Plan for Areas 1 and 2. The new plan consists of an area for use as a physical therapy facility or other sized office or other use consistent with TND (Traditional Neighborhood Design) and approximate 84 room hotel and approximately 30,000 square feet of commercial retail. Total investment will be \$39,382,123.
 - 2) 39th and Rainbow Community Development District. This is a mixed use project and includes a 1 percent sales tax add-on with a 21 year term. The CID will have a cap of \$1.3 million for the \$39 million project. A resolution was introduced allowing the Unified Government to issue IRB's for the sole purpose of granting a sales tax exemption for the project. No tax abatement is associated with the IRB's. (This tax exemption is only for the construction materials.) Approval was given for both projects.

Pat Yingst and Marilyn Bynum

Recent U.S. Senate Votes

[Short-term Continuing Resolution](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (91-9) The Senate gave final approval to this continuing resolution funding government operations through March 18, 2011. Passage of the CR gives lawmakers time to work out a long-term solution to the 2011 fiscal year budget. The president signed it into law later that day.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **YES**

[Patent Reform Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (95-5) The Senate passed this bill that would overhaul the nation's patent system and change the way they are issued and challenged. The House is expected to pass its own patent bill.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **YES**

[Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011](#) - Vote **Rejected** (44-56) The Senate rejected this House-passed continuing resolution that would have reduced spending by \$57.5 billion over the remainder of the 2011 fiscal year. The current, short-term continuing resolution expires on March 18, 2011.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **YES**

[Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011](#) - Vote **Rejected** (42-58) The Senate also rejected a Democratic alternative to the full-year continuing resolution that would have reduced spending by \$4.7 billion over the remainder of the 2011 fiscal year.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **NO** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **NO**

Recent U.S. House Votes

[Short-term Continuing Resolution](#) - Vote **Passed** (335-91, 6 Not Voting) The House passed this continuing resolution funding government operations through March 18, 2011. Passage of the CR gives lawmakers time to work out a long-term solution to the 2011 fiscal year budget. The president signed it into law the next day.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Small Business Paperwork Mandate Elimination Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (314-112, 6 Not Voting) The House voted to repeal a provision of the 2010 health care bill requiring businesses to report payments to vendors over \$600 to the Internal Revenue Service. There is support in the Senate for repeal, but the two chambers disagree on how to offset the cost of repeal.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[FHA Refinance Program Termination Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (256-171, 5 Not Voting) This bill would end a Federal Housing Administration program that helps homeowners who owe more than their homes are worth refinance their mortgages. The bill is unlikely to see action in the Senate.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**.

[Emergency Mortgage Relief Program Termination Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (242-177, 13 Not Voting) This House bill would terminate the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Emergency Homeowner Loan Program and redirect the unused funds to paying down the national debt. The program provides emergency loans to unemployed homeowners in certain states. The bill is unlikely to see action in the Senate.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

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

Upcoming Events

Saturday April 2	General Meeting: "Civil Discourse in an Uncivil Environment;" 8:30 a.m. social time, 9 a.m. program, board meeting, 11 a.m.; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
Tuesday April 5	International Relations Committee, Great Decisions: Topic: Germany Ascendant; 7 p.m. Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, Overland Park, KS.
Wednesday April 6	Let's Talk Issues: Topic: "Johnson County: Environmental Changes and Challenges."
Tuesday April 19	International Relations Committee, Great Decisions: Topic: Financial Crisis; 7 p.m. Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, Overland Park, KS.
Friday April 29	Naturalization Ceremony: Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5th and State, Kansas City, KS
Saturday April 30	LWVK State Convention: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Guesthouse Inn, 2700 W. 18th Ave, Emporia, KS
Saturday May 7	Annual Meeting and Making Democracy Work Award and Luncheon: 9 a.m.; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS

The deadline for the May VOTER is April 15.