



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, May 7 Annual Meeting **Atonement Lutheran Church - 9948 Metcalf**

9 - 10:30 a.m. - Annual Meeting
10:30 a.m. - Awards and Luncheon

Special Presentations

LWV Essay Scholarship Award recipient Taylor Caldwell will read her winning essay.

“Making Democracy Work” Award

Recipient: Annabeth Surbaugh

Luncheon Tickets: \$15
Reservation Deadline: April 22
Call 913 406 8709 or email cdeanda4@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you!

President's Message

I have been proud to serve as the President of Johnson County League of Women Voters for the past year. It is a bittersweet moment for me as I recall some very rich and rewarding moments. Now is the time for me to move on to other experiences within the League. I appreciate all the assistance I have had from a multitude of people, not all on the Board of Directors.

As it is with all past League presidents I feel the need to sing the praises of my Board members -- an exceptional Board indeed. **Harriet Duff** as President-Elect has been my watch-dog and follower as she continues to find ways to improve our League for next year. She produced a complete copy of the duties of each Board member, and these duties are now being implemented. **Ann Arnott**, who took over the duties of First Vice President from Harriet Duff who had become President-Elect, has given us some fantastic and informative programs in this past year. I commend Ann and her committee for the successful Holiday party in December. This is a meet and greet for elected officials and a way to get acquainted with public officials. **Sandy Ackerson**, Second Vice-President, continues to assist Harriet Duff with producing the Annual Booklet. She also remains Chair of the Speakers Bureau which expands our visibility throughout the community.

Edys Cacy, Secretary, provides us with timely minutes. She has gone the extra mile to delve into older minutes to assist the Board with accurate details when needed. Our Treasurer, **Candy Birch**, took on this job of financial reporting and keeps the Board apprised of all monies spent, as well as locating new banking locations for our CD's and reserves. Candy also serves on the Quest for Judicial Diversity committee, and on the committee for Environmental and Solid Waste Management in conjunction with Johnson County.

Myrna Stringer, our By-Laws Director, has been a constant source of information for me. Without her guiding hand and knowledge of the League's past structure, we might have faltered as a Board. Her service over these years has been invaluable. **Ann Etter**, our Government Director, has taken the task of coordinator for Let's Talk Issues and will present some great programs in the upcoming year. She has been very active in our Candidate Forums series and never says "no" when I ask for assistance. **Diane Kuhn**, our State First Vice President, also consented to be our Historian. We are pleased to have her experience and knowledge of all things local and state when questions arise. **Cynthia Wilson and Anne McCleery** are Co-Hospitality chairpersons who are our silent helpers as they arrange for all the "goodies" and coffee at each meeting. They are diligent and organized and deserve a large round of applause (I know, as I had this position when I first joined League) for all their good work. Both women assisted with the Holiday party and will assist with our Annual meeting in May.

Nancy Martin, liaison to the Board from the International Relations committee, has been active with Nan Wilson in presenting important issues in other countries to their Great Decisions discussions group. Most recently, along with Janis McMillen, Virginia Johnson and Karen Winn, Nancy attended a meeting with six women from Haiti to discuss their country's way of life and relate how League activities make our members better citizens. Nancy also was Chairperson for the 2011-2012 budget committee and has done an excellent job interpreting facts to present a completed budget for the upcoming year.

Susan Horst and Nancy Gatz, Co-Membership chairpersons, have done a superb job of updating and maintaining our membership lists. They have installed new ways of gathering information about new and older members which in turn have assisted the Board in many ways. These two dedicated people are always there at the door to greet new guests and members. To me they are invaluable.

Ellen Miller stepped into some pretty big shoes when she became Natural Resources Director. Elaine Giessel had been in this position for some time, and Ellen made the change extremely well. She has served on an Environmental and Solid Waste committee in conjunction with Johnson County Environmental Dept. Ellen has also taken on a position as Director with LWVKansas.

Nancy Jefferis, Observer Corps Director, is always on the lookout for new talent to observe the various local organizations for the League. She collects the material of the League observers who attended the various community meetings. Our VOTER Editor, **Ann Norbury**, formats and edits submitted articles for our monthly newsletter. Ann has been a great help to me, and when I need anything from the past issues, has been able to glean the exact item I need. What a treasure!

Polly Swafford, I have much praise for her as a diligent, exacting and imaginative person as Public Relations Director. Besides Board Briefs in the VOTER, she has developed an idea that I had when I became President. Polly conducted interviews with many of our League people, and then produced beautifully written Member Spotlight articles for the VOTER. I have great praise for this woman's journalistic abilities.

One of our newer members, **Carisa De Anda**, has taken on the position of Social Policy Director and has tackled the Making Democracy Work award event with gusto. She is always smiling and confident in her abilities which have shown that she can accomplish most anything she sets her mind to. A great asset to the Board!

Jodie Dietz, another young woman who has shown multitasking is possible, is our Voter Service Director. After another year in which a multitude of candidate forums kept her quite busy, she has moved on to a different position on the Board. We will miss her smiling face at all the forums next year. **Virginia Johnson** took over the duties of Naturalization Chairperson last year. Along with her committee she makes sure that new citizens register to vote following naturalization ceremonies. We thank these ladies for their due diligence with this project.

The LWV-JC phone system is still in place and phone calls are answered by our **Peggy Neal**. She keeps the President up-to-date on questions from callers. **Bob Jefferis**, our sound equipment man, is a dedicated and dutiful person who sets up the equipment at each meeting and reminds us how to handle the microphones when we speak. Bob is retiring from this duty, and we will miss him. **Mark Adamson**, our webmaster, has been very helpful when I needed to post information for the League. A big round of applause is appropriate when I speak of **Bradley Appelbaum** as he is a constant help when I needed items sent to the general membership. Just think, this man has to get used to a new League President every year. Last but not least, **JoAnn Anderson** has been a truly great helper as the Phone Tree Coordinator. She came to my rescue when her predecessor took another position on the Board. Well done, JoAnn!

All of the women who have participated in the League events this year deserve a round of applause for their remarkable efforts in advocating for League issues. Some of you have been a part of the voting process to educate and inform. I hope that we will make the upcoming year a tribute to all the past efforts of the League and look forward to the challenges that we may encounter. I am proud to be a part of this amazing organization.

I want to thank all who participated in the League's projects throughout the year. Advocating for League issues such as the environment, judicial diversity, and Johnson County's solid waste management plans shows our organization is active in all aspects of our community. Our mission to Educate, Advocate and Inform has been a constant guide when the League is present at candidate forums, naturalization ceremonies, meetings with elected officials and other local activities.

All League members I have had contact with have shown that when they have a given responsibility, they fulfilled it to the best of their abilities. Great praise to great women and men! I believe the League has made me more aware of the world around me, and I am proud to be a part of this organization.

Harriett Anderson

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 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 April 2 meeting

- Diane Kuhn announced she would host a program entitled Health Care in Cuba, presented by Norge Jerome at Shawnee Library at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 23.
- Harriet Duff announced the recipient of the 2011 Making Democracy Work Award will be Annabeth Surbaugh, former chair of Johnson County Commission. Myrna Stringer will introduce Surbaugh at the May 7 presentation. The winner of the student essay contest is Taylor Caldwell, an Olathe South High School student. Annual report booklets will be ready for the Annual Meeting.
- The first meeting of the new board will be May 7, following the Annual Meeting and Luncheon. The Board will not meet in June and July. Orientation will be in August.
- Carisa de Anda announced that two schools have accepted the invitation to Law Day on May 3, and she is expecting responses from the remaining schools.
- Ellen Miller announced a new model for membership recruitment.
- The Board approved a \$275 (plus tax) request by the Naturalization Committee for printing booklets, *Welcome New Citizen*.

Polly Swafford

LWVUS Membership and Leadership Growth Program Kicks Off in Kansas

“Imagine if EVERY League was as welcoming as it was respected? EVERY League had its own coach for support? EVERY League leader had training/mentoring before leading?” These questions opened up the kick-off of the membership and leadership growth program in 12 new states, including Kansas.

During the three-day training held in Warwick, RI, LWVUS board members and staff laid out the long-term vision for the League, which includes turning these “dreams” into a reality.

LWVUS is partnering with state boards to support local leagues with trained coaches from their state, techniques that really work (best practices) and ongoing communications (monthly teleconference calls). Earlier state participants report membership increases averaging 5 percent/year.

Key Kansas milestones include:

- LWVUS training of coaches. Status: Done. Coordinator Linda Johnson (Leavenworth), Kay Hale (Lawrence), Denae Lyons (Wichita) and Ellen Miller (Johnson County) attended.
- Monthly teleconferences between the state coaches and their national Ruth S. Shur Fellow. Status: The national Fellow for Kansas is Penny Van Vleet of Washington State. In Providence, Penny and the four Kansas coaches calendared phone calls through December and created an action plan.
- 2-day in-state training. Status: Scheduled for August 26-27 in Manhattan, all expenses are paid for by LWVUS, which will also conduct the training. Participants will be 2-3 members of each participating local league including the local president, plus the four Kansas coaches and our Shur Fellow, Penny Van Vleet.
- Monthly conference calls of the participating local league and its state coach. Status: Presidents of Kansas’ eight leagues – Emporia, Great Bend, Johnson County, Lawrence/Douglas County, Manhattan/Riley County, Salina, Topeka/Shawnee County and Wichita -- will soon get an official invitation from LWVUS president Ernestine Krehbiel.

Through this membership and leadership program, LWVUS reaches out to local leagues in four major ways:

- LWVUS pays all in-state training expenses – hotel, meals and travel for the 2-3 participants and president from each participating local league; the LWVUS coaching team; and materials.
- LWVUS paid for developing the membership and leadership model – researching best practices, the training curriculum and training materials. It has refined the model per the experiences of earlier states.
- LWVUS paid for the intensive 3-day training attended by the four Kansas coaches – travel, hotel, meals, coaching team and materials.
- LWVUS will pay for monthly teleconferences – between the local league and its coach; and between the state coaches and the Ruth S. Shur Fellow.

This program is supported by the LWV’s Leaders for Leadership Fund. For more information about the fund or to learn more about the program, please visit www.lwv.org

Ellen Miller

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, which 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). Mark your calendar for the following Naturalization Ceremonies.

- May 13* Court off-site at Fort Scott
- June 24 Magistrate Judge Gerald L. Rushfelt
- July 29 Judge Robert D. Berger

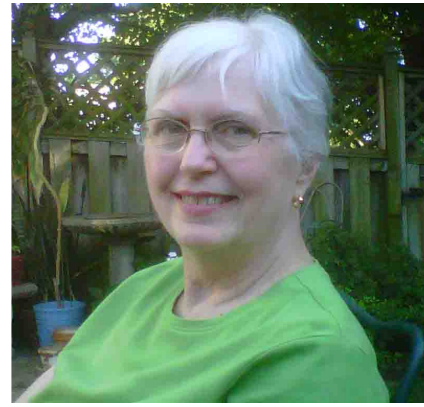
Thanks to all who helped at the Naturalization Ceremony in Leavenworth on March 25: Marilyn Bynum, Mary Gitzendonner, Christine Hutchins, Pat Yingst and Anne Malin. Anne drove us to Leavenworth, took pictures and helped close down the registration. The court thanked us for being willing to go the extra mile.

We will attend the Naturalization Ceremony at Fort Scott thanks to Harriett Anderson and members of the Naturalization committee: Norge Jerome, Mary Gitzendonner, Christine Hutchins and Sheri Potter.

Virginia Johnson

Member Spotlight: Harriet Duff

Harriet Duff, in-coming President of JCLWV, brings with her a wealth of experience in volunteering and working with non-profit organizations as well as a long-standing interest in history and government. She joined the JCLWV four years ago and immediately found herself on the board as Second Vice President and then as First Vice President in charge of programs. She has also served *one year* as President-Elect. In those years she has worked on creating the Annual Book with officers' annual reports, designing the League informational bookmark, and selling League T-shirts.



Duff says she “has lived all sorts of places.” Her father was an army chaplain; consequently, her family lived in Japan, Germany and Washington state, Oklahoma and California in the U.S. Later when she married, her then husband Angus was in the Air Force which meant more traveling. They had three sons, Angus, Jr., Ian, and Duart. After Angus retired from the Air Force, they settled in Kansas City. Today her three grown sons and their families, including seven grandchildren, also live in the metro area.

"My career in volunteerism was launched from the Junior League in the Seventies and Eighties," said Duff. "I was the first working member on their executive board as Community Vice President. I was the guinea pig at a time of transition when women were beginning to work outside their homes. I learned a lot about organizational systems that I would later apply to my work and volunteer life. As their local and state public policy chair, the Junior League was also my first introduction to local and state issues. This proved to be an asset for both my working life and for when I retired.

“In the late 80s I went back to school and earned a BA degree from UMKC. Three years later, I graduated with a MA degree in public administration with emphasis on non-profits.”

This led to Duff’s working for the Kansas City Hospice, as Executive Director for the Alzheimers Association and most recently as Executive Director for the Health Partnership Clinic which provides low-cost health care to the uninsured in Johnson County. In that role she came to speak to the JCLWV and decided that she wanted to join the League upon her upcoming retirement.

In addition to her work with the League, Duff is active with her Episcopal Church and the Civil War Round Table. As a representative from the JCLWV, she serves on the Johnson County Citizens Visioning Committee to help develop its 20-year plan. The group studies issues within Johnson County, such as finances, environment, roads, housing, and others across the spectrum. She enjoys traveling with her friend and fellow League member, Sandy Ackerson. Since the Eighties they have visited every state except Nevada and also Canada, Ireland, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

Harriet Duff will officially assume the presidency at the May 2011 annual meeting of our League. She says, “As Vice President, I’ve enjoyed meeting our various speakers, and as President, I hope to play off my experience and strength in organizational development.”

Polly Swafford

Secrets of a Civil Discourse

The panelists at our April 2 meeting referred to several books on civility. The titles are:

- *Choosing Civility: The Twenty-five Rules of Considerate Conduct* by P. M Forni
- *The Civility Solution: What to Do When People Are Rude* by P.M. Forni
- *Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World* (The Frank W. Abrams Lectures) by Daniel Yankelovich

Fair and Diverse Judiciary

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. We are planning a spring event to **begin informing young people in middle school about a judicial career path and encouraging them to pursue an academic path that will make a judgeship possible.**

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 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

Law Day -- May 3

Johnson County Bar Association's Law Day celebration will be held at the Johnson County Courthouse (100 N. Kansas Avenue, Olathe) from 5 to 9 p.m. on May 3.

The evening's event will focus on the Kansas court system, including discussion of infamous criminal cases, presentations from law enforcement officials and public interest attorneys, tours of the courthouse led by judges and an opportunity for the public to ask an attorney about a variety of common legal issues that arise in everyday life. The Sheriff's Department CSI Unit will present its latest technology and crime kits. The Emergency Response Team will display tactical weapons and open a Mobile Response Command Post to the public.

Additionally the Johnson County law library will open its doors to guide citizens through its valuable free resources, and public and non-profit exhibitors will host booths on mental health, legal, domestic violence, and civic related issues. Barbecue and refreshments will be available. All donations will benefit Feed the Need.

League will have a table with voter registration forms, as well as information on judicial diversity. To volunteer to help, please contact Ann Norbury (268-8831, anorbury@aol.com).

Membership

Now that we are approaching Summer, please think about how much we learned and accomplished this year. Wouldn't it be great to include family and friends for another great year during our 2011-12 meetings and activities? Take a Membership Referral Card or two with you at the May meeting. Keep it in mind when you are visiting this summer. There should be significant interest in the 2012 national elections, and our year leading up to the elections should be very interesting.

Nancy Gatz and Susan Horst

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).

We'll Miss You, Wanda Brussell

Leaving a community in which you have lived for many years often evokes sadness. But being able to reflect on good friendships, important accomplishments, and contentment that one has devoted one's time to make the community better for all residents gives the departure more of a warming glow.

We surely hope it is that way for our long-term, respected and remarkable member, Wanda Brussell.

If you didn't know, Wanda and husband Glenn are moving to the St. Louis area to be near their daughter and son-in-law.

Long-term League members are familiar with the contributions which Wanda has made over many years of devoted involvement in the studies, projects, committees, and Board of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County. Wanda was the Executive Secretary for the Board for some years and continued such functions for many more years. She wrote letters on issues to be signed by the current president of our League to be sent to the Star. She dug into the facts and figures and tables and charts of Kansas and federal budgets in a library building (now gone) with a League colleague to tease out their meaning. She wrote articles for public relations purposes. She was very active in the International Relations Committee. She was the one to go to for help with a problem on a study or for information about how the League works. She did about any kind of job that the League needed to have done – capably and efficiently.

In addition to the League, Wanda was active in other parts of the community. Way back – in the 70s or earlier - she was a member of the Shawnee Mission Fair Housing Council which worked to end customary practices of segregation which impacted people of color and of minority religion. One of the successes she shared was the establishment of an integrated community north of the river in the Parvin Road area. She reported that it now has a citizen board and is fully integrated.

Wanda was also very active in the Shawnee Mission Unitarian Society. She also held various offices in the Johnson County Unitarian Universalist Fellowship.

Wanda's LWVJC colleagues describe her as very bright, one you can trust, involved in all of the issues addressed by the League, passionate about all of them, insightful, articulate, dedicated to the legislative process, devoted to the League, and – despite discouraging developments - hopeful that good ends will still be realized. She believes that she and her colleagues have worked for the common good.

As Wanda slowly packs for the move, she enjoys recalling her work with wonderful people who had good intentions, did productive work together on committees, and were able to get good things done. She is pleased that her involvement in the League and other groups has brought her a broadened vision of the world and how it works.

It's true. We will miss you, Wanda.

Frank Neff

Did You Know?

The LWVUS and nearly all state and local Leagues are 501(c)4 organizations, which means that contributions to them are not tax deductible. An individual cannot deduct League dues on his/her income taxes as a charitable contribution because the League is established as a lobbying organization.

However, the League also maintains an education fund—the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). It is a 501(c)3 organization, which means that contributions to it are tax-deductible for the donor. It is through this side of the League that voter information and citizen education activities are carried out at the national level, many through grants from foundations. As a service to Leagues, the State and Local Grants Program of the LWVEF banks funds raised by local and state Leagues that are earmarked for local/state educational activities, thus freeing Leagues of the legal and fiscal red tape that operation of such a fund entails. The key criteria for ensuring that such a project is “educational” are:

- No lobbying will be associated with the event/publication, although advocacy is acceptable (Lobbying is defined as an attempt to influence specific legislation, transmits a point of view on a specific piece of legislation to elected officials or their staffs, as well as a call to action urging the public to contact their legislators about a specific piece of legislation. Lobbying activities must be funded through general operating funds.)
- The event/publication will be offered to the general public.
- Questions for candidates will be neutral/nonpartisan.
- All candidates will be treated equally.

Many of the educational activities conducted by state and local Leagues are eligible to be funded with tax deductible monies.

In the last two years, thanks to the generosity of our membership, our Education Fund donations have financed our Essay Contest Scholarship Award (\$1,000 per year.) This year, we used Education Fund monies to pay half of our Per Member Payment to the national League (over \$1,900). In addition, we awarded \$500 to a local high school for its High School Voter Registration Project and paid for advertising our Candidate Forums (\$400+).

After the essay scholarship award is presented in May, our Education Fund balance will be under \$300.

Please consider a **tax-deductible donation** to the Education Fund to continue our efforts. Your donation is credited to the Johnson County League fund even though it is held at the national level. Make your check payable to **JoCo LWV Education Fund**. *This is an opportunity to help the LWV of Johnson County continue our service to the community through our forums and other special programs.* Checks can be given to Treasurer Candy Birch or mailed to League of Women Voters of Johnson County, P.O. Box 13491, Shawnee Mission, KS 66282-3491. We accept corporate donations as well, so let us know if you have a contact.

Candy Birch, Treasurer LWV Jo Co 2010-2011

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

Johnson County WaterOne Board April 12 meeting (www.waterone.org)

- Customer survey proposed. After a seven year lapse, a new series of customer surveys would provide quarterly information. Telephone surveys would be completed with about 200 residential customers chosen randomly. ETC Institute of Olathe would conduct the surveys in the early evening on weekdays. Staff will look into issues raised by the board such as handling “do not call” status and if any adult answering the phone would be interviewed.
- External auditor finds no problems. Auditing firm McGladrey & Pullen reported that WaterOne was “clean.” That’s the unqualified top level possible. The same was true for its examination of the utility’s internal controls on handling monies.
- Steps towards wholesale water contracts. Interest has grown in attracting wholesale, long term water contracts due to (1) decreased consumption during the winter season, (2) slow development in Johnson County and (3) high capacity (30 million gallons/day) at the new Wolcott plant. The board eliminated the 25% System Development Charge for wholesale contracts but retained the right of final approval on any that are proposed.

Ellen Miller

Olathe School Board March 3 meeting

In addition to routine and customary business, the Board:

- Was updated on the progress of the Strategic Plan for 2011-2016. Two hundred eighty people provided input via the school district web site in addition to meetings with various stakeholders.
- Heard a report from the state that compared operating expenditures among districts. Olathe spends 0.54 percent of its operating budget on general administration compared to a state average of 2.7 percent. It also spends more on instruction (68 percent) compared to the state average (61.88 percent).
- Learned about the following school finance formula components: Base State Aid Per Pupil; Local Option Budget, Capital Outlay Funding, and Bond and Interest Funding.

Connie Richards

Shawnee Mission School Board April 11 meeting

Superintendent: Revised Board Policy JQ: Student Fees, Fines and Charges (1st reading) Student with Medical Card, Help Wave, Homelessness or Hardship issues will have fees, fines and charges waived.

Recommendation for FY 12 Budget Reductions: \$20,000,000 has already been cut in the past two years but an additional 8.3 million must be cut for 2012 because of the State Legislature and the Governor's tax cuts for each student in 2012 as well as other aid given by the state. The superintendent made the following recommendations:

- Cut 31 teachers which will mean larger class sizes
- Cut custodial care which will mean classrooms will not be cleaned everyday
- Increase fees for all day kindergarten
- Reductions in Educational Service Department
- Reductions in administration and support staff
- Increase in bus fees
- Reduce days for certified staff
- Reduce supply services
- Reduce supplemental pay positions
- Reduce extra curriculum and coaching positions
- Eliminate purchase of library books
- Reduce Special Ed staff by 33 positions but the district will still be able to comply with state and federal guidelines.
- No change in Parents as Teachers Program
- Fifth and sixth grade band and string program will continue

This is bleak and from statements made will be bleaker in the coming years. Budget Coordinator Tim Rooney gave following assumptions: 133 fewer students in 2012, decrease in state aid, increase in SPED reimbursement rate including Medicaid cost reconciliation funding and no salary increases.

Virginia Johnson

Lenexa City Council April 5 meeting

- The Lenexa Convention and Visitors Bureau presented their semi-annual report. Hotel occupancy and revenues remain down. Area hotel managers plan to meet to brainstorm how to re-energize Lenexa hotels. The Crown Plaza hotel is undergoing major renovations and is Lenexa's only full service hotel that can host conventions.
- The Lenexa Economic Development Council also presented their semi-annual report. Retail is trending up but housing continues to lag. Business confidence is up and overall the council feels "cautiously optimistic" in spite of concerns of the possible effects of the anticipated energy crisis. The EPA will be opening offices in Lenexa and this will bring 600 + jobs to the area.
- All items on the Consent Agenda were approved including authorizing improvements to the city's park playgrounds.
- An update on the Pavement Management Program was presented. This program has a \$3.2 million budget. Lenexa citizens state pavement maintenance as a priority issue second only to police and fire services. Council member Amy Slater was very complimentary of this program stating that Lenexa residents would be amazed at how pavement management is so well analyzed and executed.

Sheri Potter

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) March 17 meeting

- Management Report:
Temporary regulation on open burning during the month of April in the Flint Hills, Wyandotte, Sedgwick and Johnson County to meet federal regulation on ozone standards.
Johnson County signed with Council of States Government in working for second chance and crime reduction with the legislature.
County Librarian Donna Lauffer appointed to the Federal Depository Library Council, which provides public access to published information on all three branches of government.
- Action Agenda: Consider authorizing a contract with Aramark Correctional Services for food services for the Nutritional Program in amount not to exceed \$520,000.
- Committee of the Whole: 2011 Citizens Survey to be sent out to 1,200 citizens to get their concerns as to quality of life, services delivered and their willingness to pay more for more services.

Virginia Johnson

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) March 24 Meeting

- Note For The Record: Chairman Eilert will sign Interlocal agreement with Overland Park and Leawood for public improvement of Nall Avenue.
- Consent Agenda: Consider reappointing Charles Carlsen as the 3rd District representative to the Public Art Commission through January 1, 2014. Two members of the public spoke opposing this appointment. There were 4 votes against and 3 for. The appointment was rejected.
- Management Reports: Johnson County once again received AAA Bond ratings from Moody and Standard and Poor.
- Legislation Update:
 - The DUI Bill that will send "four timers" to the local governments for incarceration will cost Johnson County an additional \$250,300 just for additional staff. The Legislature has already cut \$2,000,000 from Corrections.
 - Bill for Voter ID passed both Houses and is now in conference committee.
 - Bill to repeal smoking ban failed.
- Committee of the Whole: Organizational Structure and Optimization Assessment Study was presented to the Board. Grants Management Update showed grants received for Johnson County in 2010 in the total amount of \$53,223,551.

Virginia Johnson

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) April 7 Meeting

Action Agenda:

- Consider authorizing a one-year contract with Faith Technologies, Inc. for security installation and maintenance services in an amount not to exceed \$750,000 for the initial period and the option to renew for four additional one-year periods. Passed.
- Consider approving two full-time equivalent positions to establish a Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Pilot Project and expand the Mental Health Division Program under the administration and oversight of Mental Health as funded through the Justice/Mental Health Collaboration Program Grant. Passed.

Virginia Johnson

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:
 - 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.

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 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 these two projects.

Pat Yingst and Marilyn Bynum

Recent U.S. Senate Votes

[Small Business Paperwork Mandate Elimination Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (87-12, 1 Not Voting) The Senate gave final approval to this bill repealing a provision of the 2010 health care bill requiring businesses to report payments to vendors over \$600 to the Internal Revenue Service. The House passed the bill last month. The president is expected to sign it into law.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES**

Sen. Jerry Moran voted **YES**

[To ban EPA regulation of greenhouse gas emissions](#) - Vote **Rejected** (50-50) During work on the small business bill, the Senate fell short of the 60 votes required to pass this amendment that would prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating greenhouse gases for the purpose of addressing climate change. The House passed a stand-alone bill later in the week, but its future is unclear at this time.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES**

Sen. Jerry Moran voted **YES**

Recent U.S. House Votes

[The HAMP Termination Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (252-170, 1 Present, 9 Not Voting) The House voted to end the Home Affordable Modification Program, a home foreclosure prevention program that uses Troubled Asset Relief Program money to help homeowners modify their mortgages. The Senate is unlikely to take up the bill.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Scholarships for Opportunity and Results Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (225-195, 12 Not Voting)

The House voted to revive a voucher program that would help low-income Washington D.C. residents send their children to private schools. The bill faces an uncertain future but could be attached to the 2011 spending bill currently being negotiated between the House and Senate.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[FAA Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (223-196, 13 Not Voting)

The House passed this bill reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration for four-years. The Senate passed a two-year bill in February. The two chambers will now work out a compromise bill.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Government Shutdown Prevention Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (221-202, 1 Present, 8 Not Voting)

This bill would declare the House-passed spending bill, H.R.1, to be enacted if the Senate does not pass a FY2011 spending bill by April 6. Supporters say the vote highlights the Senate's inability to pass a budget, while opponents say the bill is unconstitutional.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Energy Tax Prevention Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (255-172, 5 Not Voting) The House passed this bill that would prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating greenhouse gases for the purpose of addressing climate change. A similar measure failed in the Senate earlier in the week.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Net Neutrality Disapproval](#) - Vote **Passed** (240-179, 13 Not Voting) This resolution would nullify a Federal Communications Commission rule prohibiting broadband Internet service providers from blocking content or traffic. Supporters of the resolution say the FCC does not have the authority to regulate the Internet, while opponents contend the regulations are necessary to provide unfettered access to the Internet. A companion resolution has been introduced in the Senate but its future is unclear.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

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

Upcoming Events

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
Tuesday May 3	International Relations Committee, Great Decisions: Topic: Sanctions and Nonproliferation; 7 p.m. Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, Overland Park, KS.
Saturday May 7	Annual Meeting and Making Democracy Work Award and Luncheon: 9 a.m.; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
Friday May 13	Naturalization Ceremony: Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Fort Scott, KS

The deadline for the June VOTER is May 15.