LEAGUE WINS $10,000 GRANT FROM ROBLEE FOUNDATION

The trustees of the Joseph H. and Florence A. Roblee Foundation have approved a $10,000 grant for LWV of Metro St. Louis. Established in St. Louis in 1971, the Roblee Foundation is dedicated to promoting organizations that improve quality of life and help individuals to fulfill their potentials. The Foundation’s focus areas include supporting and promoting community by developing leadership and civic responsibility. Executive Director Jane Callahan encouraged the League to prioritize the purchase of cellular devices for our voter registration efforts early in 2019. Other funds will be used for an intern stipend, website updates, Centennial exhibits and other operating expenses.

The League’s grant proposal said, “As we approach the League’s second century, we need to stay current with technology and the needs of Missouri voters.” Eric Fey, Democratic Director of Elections at the St. Louis County Board of Elections, has asked the League to switch from paper registration forms to touchscreen registration, saying they are both more efficient and more accurate. By using this technology, we hope to reduce voter registration costs for state and local governments and avoid mistakes created from processing paper files.

The League worked directly with 19 high schools so far in 2018 and hope to double that in 2019, especially reaching those with a large percentage of African-American students. LWVMSTL focuses on St. Louis City and St. Louis County. We plan to expand our voter services to reach voters in the other six counties we cover: St. Charles, Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Warren and Washington.

“We are very appreciative of Roblee for continuing to support our important work,” said Co-President Louise Wilkerson. “We will use the funds wisely in a manner that’s consistent with the values of the Roblee Foundation.”

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Committee chair and workers for Trivia Night in February
- Co-chair of Health Committee
- Leader for Webster/Kirkwood Unit
- Leader for U. City/Clayton Unit
- Chairs for International & Transportation Committees

Call the LWVMSTL office for information at 314.961.6869.

At the Dec. 8 Holiday Luncheon, Co-Presidents Nancy Miller and Louise Wilkerson presented poinsettias to staff members Julie Behrens and Jean Dugan.
We hope everyone is enjoying a bit of downtime as we approach the new year. So many of you worked very hard during the campaigns this fall; we all deserve a break.

Four of our members were doing a special assignment during the past few months. Linda McDaniel, Sydell Shayer, Billie Teneau and Ida West took time from their busy schedules to share interviews with the Women’s Studies class at Maryville University. These videos became part of the exhibit entitled Rebel Girls about the histories of women active in the struggle for women’s rights in St. Louis. The exhibit will be on display until the 20th of December at the Maryville University Library. Check it out!

Another group among us never takes a break: the registrars for new citizen naturalization ceremonies in St. Louis. We all had a surprise this month when Catherine Stenger, the indefatigable chair of the effort, had surprise surgery after Thanksgiving. She is doing well recuperating, and we hope she will be back with us soon. Barbara Harris has stepped in and is temporarily leading the group. Barbara is also already scheduling candidate forums for school districts in March. If you would like to be involved in either of these services, now would be a good time to give Barbara a call.

Several committees are continuing to meet to finalize their program proposals for the upcoming two years to be proposed at units, committees and finally the board meeting in January. There are so many issues members are interested in; make sure you attend one of these meetings in December or January to catch up with everyone and let your voice be heard.

In a larger circle, a new group, Show Me Integrity, is forming to continue to clean up big money in elections and other issues affecting voter rights. The board will be discussing our involvement in this in the coming days. A separate group is also forming to combat attempts to refute the will of the voters. We will continue to support Amendment 1’s redistricting reforms.

Most recently, the holiday luncheon was a great success. Keagan’s in Forest Park was the perfect place for conversation with old and new friends. The room was truly buzzing. With 70+ attendees, all the books for children sold, and a good time was had by all. Elad Gross was an informed and informative speaker.

Looking back over 2018, we are in awe of everything the Metro League was involved in and accomplished. We held forums, news conferences, voter registrations, media interviews, a phone bank, published numerous letters to the editor and were quoted in additional articles. The four grants we received during this year, in addition to numerous monetary gifts and the wonderful new members who joined, demonstrate we must be doing something right!

— Co-Presidents Nancy J. Miller and Louise T. Wilkerson

2018-2019 LWVMS STL OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents: Nancy J. Miller and Louise T. Wilkerson
First Vice President: Catherine Stenger
Second Vice President: Barbara Harris
Secretary: Nancy Price
Treasurer: Steve Smith

Directors: Angie Dunlap, Eve Golden, Joan Hubbard, Irma Ruebling, Jennifer Rushing, Anne Sappington, Cathy Satkowski, Sydell Shayer, Carol Strawbridge
Editor: Joan Esserman
Staff: Jean Dugan and Julie Behrens
POSTER PROMOTES YOUTH VOTER REGISTRATION

Laura Champion from Lafayette High School in the Rockwood School District won the League’s statewide poster contest to promote youth voter registration. Using Education Fund money, LWVMO will send a copy of the 11” x 17” poster to every high school in Missouri before the April 2019 local elections. The finalists in the competition included students from Kansas City, Sedalia, Springfield and Vandalia.

Metro St. Louis League Co-Presidents Nancy Miller and Louise Wilkerson surprised Champion with a $500 Visa gift card. “This vibrant poster catches your attention,” Miller says. “Laura is a very talented young artist and I hope this poster will inspire more interest in voting among high school students.”

"The colors make it more exciting and enthusiastic, which is my stance on getting people to vote," Champion said. "I’m passionate about having people’s voices heard. I like a lot of the pop art style I've been experimenting with, and I figured because it was multi-colored many people would be able to relate to it." Co-President Louise Wilkerson added, "I like it because the young woman portrayed symbolizes multi-ethnicity, so it could appeal to any student."

Miller noted that overall voter turnout of almost 60 percent in November was unusually high for a mid-term election. An early estimate shows 31 percent of young adults ages 18 to 29 nationwide voted in 2018, but that would be an improvement over 20 percent in 2014.

State President Kathleen Boswell agreed. “We hope this poster will encourage more young people to register to vote as soon as they are eligible, which in Missouri is six months before their 18th birthday.”

ELECTION SHIFTS CONTROL OF U.S. HOUSE, MISSOURI LEGISLATURE STAYS RED

While the November election gave Democrats control of the U.S. House of Representatives, Republicans maintain control of the U.S. Senate and Missouri General Assembly.

The number of elected Democrats and Republicans in Missouri stays exactly the same in 2019 as in 2018. Three House Democratic seats were won by Republicans, two in Jefferson County and one in northeast MO, and three House Republican seats were won by Democrats, one in St. Louis County and two in the suburbs of Kansas City. There are still 47 Democrats in Missouri House and 116 Republicans (109 is a super majority). There are 10 Democrats in the MO Senate, and 24 Republicans (23 is a super majority).
REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE AND COMPOST

As the holiday season approaches, the Environmental Quality Committee suggests enjoying eco-friendly holidays by simplification.

Over 28 billion pounds of food is wasted every holiday season because of the increased volume of food prepared. Take extra steps to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost. Consider reducing the menu slightly. This will help lessen the amount of food thrown away. Eat and drink locally. The average holiday feast travels 3,000 miles to your table. Commit to reducing that distance to 200-300 miles by supporting farmers in Missouri and Illinois. Choose organic over conventionally-grown produce and meats to reduce environmental damage. Try to reduce use of disposal plates, cups and food service. Give away the excess food or prepare frozen meal plates that you can thaw and microwave.

Travel responsibly. As you make travel plans this holiday, consider purchasing carbon credits to offset fossil fuel use (either by car or plane). Remember to carpool to events, take public transit and combine trips to reduce the amount of fuel used.

For gift giving, choose sustainable materials such as organic cotton, hemp, silk and wood—all natural and renewable materials that support sustainable farmers. Shop locally-owned businesses to support your community and local economy. Wrap gifts with sustainable wrapping paper. Use the greeting cards received last year, newspaper comics or any other recycled material to wrap gifts. Save and reuse gift bags by replacing the attached tag with one made from recycled paper or use tags made from last year’s cards. Give money to a local charity, sponsor a child overseas, or make a donation to the League of Women Voters Metro STL in the name of your loved ones.

Consider your New Year’s resolutions with a new perspective, keeping the environment in mind.

If you want to improve your health, personal and environmental health are interlinked. Consider things like eating fresh, local foods to help you lose weight and support organic farming. Go chemical-free in other areas of your life with natural household cleaners and organic pest control.

You can organize your home and life to reduce the stress from the accumulation of “stuff” that creates more chores and does harm to our natural resources. Donating our excess to a good cause keeps it out of a landfill. And by decreasing our consumption of new "stuff," we keep our environmental footprint small.

Going green is on everyone’s mind these days. If it’s your New Year’s resolution, you’re in the right place. Green living is a big topic with lots of steps. Taking small steps toward greener living is a great way to combat climate change!

EQ Tip for December: Remember to follow the three Rs: reduce, reuse and recycle during the holiday season. EQ challenges members to carpool to League events to reduce our carbon footprint.

— Mickey Croyle, Environmental Quality Committee Chair
**CONTROVERSY OVER DEATH PENALTY METHOD OF EXECUTION**

Traditionally, executions were carried out by firing squad, hanging and electrocution. More recently, executions have been done by lethal injection drugs. There are no guidelines for types of drugs, safety issues or suppliers. Many states purchase drugs from compounding pharmacies who make up drugs to order. There is no way to test these experimental drugs before using them. Some executions by drugs have gone awry, inflicting extreme torture.

Death row inmates are now requesting older execution methods. States are also postponing executions until they can come up with a method that complies with constitutions’ requirements of the procedure not being cruel, unusual or arbitrarily applied.

Most pharmacies using the so-called standard or safer drugs are now refusing to sell them for death penalty purposes. Because of the illegality of the death penalty in most of Europe, the European Union, which is the main supplier of the drugs, has banned the sale of the proven drugs. The League supports abolishing the death penalty.

— Sydell Shayer, Death Penalty Committee

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**NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE**

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact is an agreement among a group of U.S. states and the District of Columbia to award all their respective electoral votes to whichever presidential candidate wins the overall popular vote in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Our goal is to get all League members knowledgeable about the National Popular Vote (NPV) so when it gets introduced in the Missouri legislature, we will have a cadre of members ready to act. Obviously, the League cannot do it alone. We have to educate a large number of people throughout the state.

The National Popular Vote Committee presented information at November unit meetings that stimulated a lot of questions and discussion. If you missed the meeting, contact slshayer@gmail.com for a summary of the material. The internet also has lots of easy-to-read material. Let us know if you would like to show the PowerPoint presentation to a group or request a Speakers Bureau presentation.

At our December meeting, the committee worked on an action plan and timeline. We have two new long-distance committee members — one from Kansas City and one from the Southwest League.

— Sydell Shayer, NPV Committee

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**JOIN THE LEAGUE’S $100 CLUB**

The League of Women Voters of St. Louis formed in 1919, a year before women won the long fight for suffrage. To celebrate this milestone in our history and kick off the next century, the League would like to invite you to join the Hundredth Anniversary Hundred Dollar Club.

Club membership is a $100 tax-deductible donation to the League. Membership entitles you to an invitation to a members-only special event as well as to numerous other celebrations the Centennial Committee is planning in 2019 and 2020 with the theme “Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.”

Thanks to Agnes and Dave Garino for kicking off this effort with a very generous contribution. You can sign up now at lwvstl.org or watch for a mailing.

Members’ input is always welcome. If you have any questions or suggestions about centennial events, please call the office at 314.961.6869.
THE ROAD AHEAD

The Missouri Legislature voted to allow women in Missouri to vote in presidential elections in 1919. Soon after, membership in the St. Louis Equal Suffrage League rose to 8,000. In November 1919, when the St. Louis Equal Suffrage League officially changed its name to the League of Women Voters of St. Louis, thousands of League members were actively preparing future voters for the decisions they would be making at the ballot box. Newly-created Citizenship Schools taught the principles of government, organization, publicity, public speaking, suffrage history and argument, parliamentary law and use of literature. Schools were established in each of the 16 congressional districts and the St. Louis City Night School; some women traveled miles to attend classes.

Just as these women were charged with actively advocating for issues important to their cities and country in a post WW I environment, we are challenged to study, educate and advocate for those issues vitally important today. Much of the last year has been spent discussing and presenting to numerous organizations about bills on the November ballot.

Many key issues beg our attention and resources:

- voter rights, including voter registration and expanding voting opportunities
- rollback of environmental policies
- restrictions and reductions of health care programs
- behavioral health issues
- justice system and the proliferation of guns
- financial and policy restrictions on public education
- continuing oversight of the implementation of the new ethics laws

As a League, we are called upon not only to recognize and express concern for these issues but also to get involved in providing solutions for them. The only factor limiting our involvement is member participation. We need all of us to step up to positions of chairing committees, organizing events, joining the board, visiting legislators both in their local offices and in Jefferson City, and in the day-to-day efforts of contacting our legislators and reminding them that we are watching what they support and how they vote.

The next legislative session begins on January 9. As you know, there are efforts being discussed to set up re-votes for right-to-work and Amendment 1. A new group, Defend the Win to Clean Up Missouri Politics, has been established to support this fight. Regardless of whether or not these plans are played out, we need to be reminding our elected officials that we are watching them from Day 1.

— Nancy Miller
Gross Shines Light on Dark Money at Holiday Luncheon

“I’ve been referring people to the League for a long time, said Elad Gross, the lawyer who spoke about dark money at the Dec. 8 Holiday Luncheon. Gross founded the Education Exchange Corps to teach local youth about governments, civic engagement, financial management and dealing with local and global challenges.

Gross defined dark money as anonymous political contributions that prevent us from seeing if anyone is trying to buy our government. He shared several examples, including his investigation of A New Missouri, Inc.

Dark money often flows through non-profit 501(c)(4) organizations to political campaigns for the party in power. A New Missouri spent $13 million to support Eric Greitens’ gubernatorial campaign but has never filed a tax return or disclosed its donors.

U.S. Supreme Court will hear a case this session about political contribution disclosures. Gross is working to draft legislation to change Missouri’s non-profit law to require disclosure of contributions to organizations that are involved in politics. He’s also looking into contributions from Limited Liability Corporations (LLCs).

Gross answered a question about a recent 8th Circuit Court ruling indicating that anyone who speaks with legislators on behalf of an organization should register as a lobbyist. That ruling doesn’t affect citizens who speak with their legislators on their own behalf, but he cautioned League members who meet with legislators in Jefferson City to follow the case and consider paying $10 to register with the Missouri Ethics Commission.

Gross later made a Facebook post that said, “Great time speaking with the League of Women Voters about dark money, government reform, and the power we have to fix our state. The League has been doing wonderful work for our country for almost 100 years. Every year, I refer Missouri voters to them to get nonpartisan information about what’s on the ballot, and I run into their members everywhere serving in our state. I was proud to join the League as a member today. Our democracy needs folks from all backgrounds to be engaged in our government. These folks are doing the work to make that happen.”

Members bought or brought more than 150 children’s books to donate to Circle of Concern and Red Circle.
SPEAKERS BUREAU

The final tally for the November election season was 64 events with 2,430 audience members. In addition, there were two radio spots and one television appearance, which reached many more people. Barbara Harris also organized several Issues Forums. This is an extraordinary number of voters who heard the League explain the many, often confusing, ballot issues. We should all feel good that the League continues to be regarded as a valued source of nonpartisan voting information. Thank you to all who contributed to the wonderful success of Speakers Bureau!

— Nancy Price, Speakers Bureau Chair

POSTER PARTY!

Come to the League office on Friday, January 18, to make a poster for the STL Women’s March scheduled to be held that weekend. Come anytime between 11 am and 3 pm. The League supports Women’s March efforts that encourage citizens to make their voices heard in our government. Free, fair and accessible elections are important to us. Policies and issues that have an impact on women, children and families are often studied by the League. Show off your creative talents with a colorful poster. And march that weekend to bring attention to issues that are important to you.

— Angie Dunlap, Membership, Social Media/Website Chair

LAST CHANCE! MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2018 - 2019

All members of the League of Women Voters received a membership renewal letter in April. If you have not yet renewed, you should have recently received a phone call reminder.

LWV of Metro St. Louis is a non-profit that depends largely on memberships to generate revenue to do our work for democracy. Your membership makes the League voice stronger when we advocate for issues and fight for voter rights. Our membership count in January will determine the number of delegates we get to the LWVMO State Convention in May.

Thank you for your past support. I hope you value the League’s work and decide to renew your membership. You can renew at LWVSTL.org or mail $75 to the League office.

— Angie Dunlap, LWVMSTL Membership Chair
UNIT MEETINGS

Discussion Topic: Local & State Program Planning

Chesterfield/Creve Coeur: Thursday, Jan. 10, 9:30-11 am. Location changed to Sydell Shayer’s home at 709 Champeix Ln., Creve Coeur. Contact: Eve Golden, 314.469.9985 or j.golden@sbcglobal.net

North County: NOTE: NO DEC. MEETING. Tuesday, Jan. 15. Future meetings second Tues. of month, 5 to 7 pm. Florissant Valley Library (room 3), 195 New Florissant Rd. S., Florissant, MO. Contact: Louise Wilkerson, 314.438.8005 or louisew@sccglobal.net

St. Charles: TBA. Contact: Jennifer Rushing or jrush1120@live.com

St. Louis City: Saturday, Jan. 12, 10:30 am. Trinity Church, Euclid and Washington. Contact: Kathleen Farrell, 314.773.2876 or kathleenfarrell@earthlink.net

South County: Wednesday, Jan. 9, 6:00 to 7:30 pm. South County Police Precinct, 323 Sappington Barracks Rd. Contact: Angie Dunlap, 636.368.6846 or aok2bfast@hotmail.com

University City/Clayton Unit: TBA, usual meeting time is Tuesdays at 7 pm. U. City Library conference room. Contact Nancy Miller, 314.961.6869 or njsmill@yahoo.com.

Webster/Kirkwood: Wednesdays, Dec. 12 and Jan. 9, 9:30 am. First Congregational Church of Webster Groves, 10 W. Lockwood Ave. Contact: K Wentzien, 314.961.0894 (home), 314.805.6950 (cell) or suitsme.prodigy.net

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All meetings below will be held at the League office at 8706 Manchester Rd., Suite 104, Brentwood

Centennial: Jan. 8, 4 pm. Contact Nancy Miller, 314.961.6869 or njsmill@yahoo.com

Early Voting: TBA. Contact Joan Hubbard, 314-753-0689 or joanhubbard@prodigy.net

Education: Saturday, Jan.19, 10 am. Contact Nancy Miller, njsmill@yahoo.com

Environmental Quality: Thursday, Jan. 17, 4:30–5:30 pm. League Office. Note article p. 3. Contact: Mickey Croye, 314.395.7876 or erwincroyle@charter.net

Health Care: Thursday, Jan. 17, 5:30 pm. Contact: Irma Ruebling, 314.961.4539 or ruebling@att.net

Metro Board: Wednesday, Jan 23, 4:30 pm. Contact Nancy Miller, 314.961.6869 or njsmill@yahoo.com

National Popular Vote: Thursday, Jan. 3, 1:15. 709 Champeix Ln., Creve Coeur. Note article p. 4. Contact Sydell Shayer, 314-434-5116 or slshayer@gmail.com.
WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Cynthia Bausola  
St. Louis, MO  63125  
clbausola@gmail.com

Cindy Cantrell  
St. Louis, MO 63117  
cjcantrell@gmail.com

Carrie Gallagher Crompton  
St. Louis, MO  63104  
carriecrompton88@aol.com

Elizabeth Stephenson Don  
St. Louis, MO  63112  
ESD272@gmail.com

Susan Feinberg  
St. Louis, MO  63124  
susiefeinberg@aol.com

Lance Finney  
St. Louis, MO  63119  
lmfinney@hotmail.com

Marcelene Garcia  
St. Louis, MO  63116  
mgarcia@sbcglobal.net

Jayne Glaser  
Ballwin, MO  63021  
glaserjm@aol.com

Kathy Glaser  
Bridgeton, MO  63044  
katglaser@hotmail.com

Patricia Gunby  
Ballwin, MO  63021-5764  
gunbyfamily@charter.net

Megan Huether  
Manchester, MO  63021  
megandenell@gmail.com

Clare MacConnell  
St. Louis, MO  63119  
clare.macconnell@hotmail.com

Rachel Bock McClure  
St. Louis, MO  63116  
rachelbock25@gmail.com

Mary McFarland  
Chesterfield, MO  63017  
Mrba1672@yahoo.com

Pat Miller  
St. Louis, MO  63122  
millerpd@slu.edu

Donna Northcott  
St. Louis, MO  63109  
lanorte1@aol.com

Cheryl Rowland  
O’Fallon, MO  63368  
lady_harley@charter.net

Leslie Scherrer  
St. Louis, MO  63126  
lesliejs2004@yahoo.com

Yvonne Serbell  
St. Louis, MO  63127  
yserbell@yahoo.com

Lynne Shields  
St. Louis, MO  63119  
ishields53@gmail.com

Benjamin Singer  
St. Louis, MO  63130  
benjamin.d.singer@gmail.com

Steve Skrainka  
St. Louis, MO  63130-4312  
steve.skrainka@gmail.com

Laurie Velasquez  
Chesterfield, MO  63017  
laurievelasquez@yahoo.com

Sharon Wells  
Florissant, MO  63033  
rdwccswells@yahoo.com

SUFFRAGE SNIPPET

After the 19th Amendment was ratified in 1920, 125,000 women in St. Louis registered to vote in four days, far exceeding expectations.

The League encouraged women to display a placard saying, “A woman living here has registered to vote, thereby assuming responsibility of citizenship.”

Copies are available in the League office for $5.
NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If you’re observant, you’ll see the board recently approved a new title for me: I’m now executive director instead of administrative manager. The change will make it easier as I continue to work with executive directors from other Leagues across the country.

This week, I submitted a report on our LWV grant for registering new citizens and had a chance to go to a naturalization ceremony at the Eagleton Courthouse. Both activities reinforced the importance of the League’s work.

In 2018 alone, Catherine Stenger and 44 volunteers registered more than 1,350 new citizens. In the past year, League volunteers registered 1,131 students. Counting Library Registration Day, the Metro St. Louis League registered more than 3,000 voters, twice as many as in previous years. The League can also be pleased with our efforts to educate voters on a complicated ballot. Both Amendment 1 and Prop B won with more than 60 percent of the vote.

Voter turnout in the Nov. 6 election was over 69 percent in St. Louis, 64 percent in St. Charles County and about 60 percent in St. Louis City. I was one of many Leaguers who helped national Election Protection ensure that every citizen could vote even without a state-issued photo ID. The nonpartisan coalition works year-round to ensure that all voters have an equal opportunity to have that vote count.

Things haven’t quieted down much in the League office as we schedule candidate forums for the local elections in April and prepare for Centennial celebrations. I predict that the League will have even more to celebrate in 1919.

— Jean Dugan

VOLUNTEER CORNER

As we end the old year and start a new year, we want to thank all our faithful volunteers. If you have time to offer, please contact Barbara Harris, our volunteer coordinator, at volunteer@LWVstl.org.


— Julie Behrens, Staff
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 24-Jan. 1</td>
<td>Holiday Break - office reopens January 2</td>
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<td>Jan. 9</td>
<td>Legislature opens 101st session (may change)</td>
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<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>Missouri Legislative Retreat, 9 am-3 pm, Hy Vee in Columbia</td>
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<td>Jan. 19</td>
<td>Women’s March</td>
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<td>March 29</td>
<td>Centennial of Missouri law passage on women’s suffrage</td>
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<td>May 4</td>
<td>LWMVO State Convention, St. Louis</td>
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<td>June 5</td>
<td>Centennial of Congress passing of the 19th Amendment</td>
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<td>July 3</td>
<td>Centennial of Missouri ratification of the 19th Amendment</td>
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<td>Oct. 16-18</td>
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<td>Nov. 13</td>
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