

Chantal Hoffsten Joins Staff

Chantal Hoffsten is the new Office Assistant for the LWV of Missouri, working Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Hoffsten is treasurer of the Hudson Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization. A trustee for the Rock Hill Public Library Board, she demonstrated a variety of organization and bookkeeping skills as acting director for the library. She is a troop organizer and leader for the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri.

Chantal identifies as Hispanic and speaks fluent Spanish and French. She has a PhD in comparative literature and literary theory from the University of Pennsylvania.

Julie Behren's last day was Feb. 28. She worked for the League for 35 years.



Chantal Hoffsten

Don't Miss LWVMO 64th State Convention

Thursday, May 2: Suffragist Tour of Bellefontaine Cemetery (go to lwvstl.org to register).

Friday, May 3: State Board Meeting, 10 am
Convention registration opens at 12:30 pm, Business Meeting starts at 1:30 pm

Saturday, May 4: Registration opens at 8:15 am, call to order at 9 am, convention adjourns at 3 pm.

Attendees from the eight local Leagues will meet in the Hawthorne Room at the Drury Inn in Brentwood. On Friday, May 3rd, Alicia Gurrieri from LWVUS will present a workshop to help League members take action on pressing voting rights issues and stronger partnerships. At 7 Friday evening, there will be a desert reception as the volunteer board of the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis presents a fashion show.



Tishaura Jones

Saturday's keynote speaker is **Amber McReynolds**, a national leader in effective and innovative practices that increase the security, convenience and efficiency of elections. The former Director of Elections for Denver, she is now the Executive Director for the National Vote at Home Institute and serves as senior strategic adviser on various election-focused projects across the country.

Tishaura Jones, St. Louis City Treasurer, will update the convention on proposed election reforms in Missouri. She was a strong advocate for Clean Missouri and is a leader in the Show Me Integrity coalition.



Amber McReynolds

2019 LWVMO Nominating Committee Report

Slate of Officers for 2019-2021:

President: Evelyn Maddox (Kansas City/Jackson, Clay & Platte Counties)
 Vice President: Marilyn McLeod (Columbia-Boone County)
 Secretary: Louise Wilkerson (Metro St. Louis)
 Treasurer: Cindy Wunderlich (Metro St. Louis)

Slate of Directors for 2019-2021:

Melodie Armstrong (Kansas City/Jackson, Clay & Platte Counties)
 Kathleen Boswell (Sedalia-Pettis County)
 Marjorie Bramer (Southwest)
 Nancy Copenhaver (Moberly-Randolph County)
 Joan Gentry (Southwest)
 Nancy Miller (Metro St. Louis)
 Carol Schreiber (Columbia-Boone County)
 Sharon Swon (Mexico-Audrain County)

Nominating Committee for 2021:

Pauline Testerman (Kansas City/Jackson, Clay & Platte Counties)
 Elaine Blodgett (Columbia-Boone County)
 Lorraine Sandstrom (Southwest)



Evelyn Maddox

Respectfully Submitted, 2019 Nominating Committee

Peggy Placier, Chair (Columbia-Boone County)
 Elaine Blodgett (Columbia-Boone County)
 Pauline Testerman (Kansas City/Jackson, Clay & Platte Counties)
 Marjorie Bramer (Board representative, Southwest)

Historic Anniversary of the Missouri Presidential Suffrage Bill

April 5, 2019 is the 100th anniversary of a groundbreaking law passed by the Missouri Legislature in 1919, the Presidential Suffrage Bill.

In the months *prior* to the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Missouri Women Suffrage Association worked tirelessly toward enactment of legislation in Missouri which would enable women to vote for President and Vice-President. The Presidential Suffrage Bill, “Bill #1”, was the first bill introduced in the new State Capitol. It would allow the women of Missouri to vote for President and Vice-President in the 1920 election.

The bill was passed by the 50th General Assembly; and on Saturday, April 5, 1919, in the presence of members of the Missouri Women Suffrage Association, Governor Frederick D. Gardner signed the bill.

Now, 100 years later, the Missouri Senate (with the sponsorship of Senator Caleb Rowden) and the Missouri House of Representatives (with the sponsorship of Rep. Kip Kendrick) have issued Proclamations honoring this historic event.

The Missouri Women Suffrage Association became the League of Women Voters of Missouri in 1919.

Branson & Joplin: Two Potential New League Chapters!

LWVMO liaisons Marge Bramer and Joan Gentry, both of LWV-Southwest, met recently with two groups of potential new members to discuss forming new local Leagues.



The first meeting was held March 26 in Branson with current LWVSW members Ginger Witty and Sarah Presley and six other women from the Tri-Lakes area. The second gathering, on March 28, was with three Joplin residents.

At both meetings Marge and Joan presented information on the background of the LWV, its mission, goals, and organizational structure, along with our strong emphasis on the importance of League policy to be a nonpartisan political organization. In this centennial year, we also provided a brief presentation on the women's suffrage movement in the U.S.

Following the policies of LWVUS and LWVMO for forming a new local League, our representatives described our local, state, and national policies and program, providing details on many of the actions and activities we conduct.

Of special emphasis was our work in providing voter registration and education, including National Voter Registration Day, the Voters Guide, Vote 411, drug court registrations, and working with our county clerks to become deputy registrars.

Branson made plans for their second meeting, with the goals of selecting a chairperson, secretary, and treasurer, choosing a name, planning some early activities, providing information to others in their area, and applying as Members At Large with the state League.

The Joplin group plans to hold an informal gathering later in April to determine and promote interest in forming a new League. They brainstormed ideas for reaching out to others and promoting voter registration in their area.



Each unit will hold the status of Member At Large Unit as they work through the three phases for forming a local League. Joan and Marge will work with them as their sponsors and liaisons, and LWVSW has committed to support these new groups with knowledge, materials, and personal meetings with their representatives.

The League of Women Voters is vital, strong, and growing in the state of Missouri!

—Marge Bramer

**It's time for gun
sense in America**

Gun Violence – Gun Safety Background Checks: Only Part of the Problem

Ever since the tragic shootings at Marjory Stoneman High School in Parkland FL, the national conversation about gun violence is finally taking place. While often the discussion focuses on the tragedy of homicide and mass shootings– the reality is that of the 38,000 firearm deaths every year, 33% are homicides while 67% are suicide and accidental deaths. That statistic illustrates why gun safety is a such an important and core concept.

To that end, the suggestion for the current position of LWVMO in the *Guide to State Action* is right on point: *The concept of Gun Safety is to protect the health and safety of citizens by supporting measures that promote consumer safety.* These measures speak to the easy access to firearms – and would include closing the loopholes of the 1993 background check bill and legislating for safe gun storage. While we advocate for this kind of legislation, we must recognize the need for immediate steps to prevent suicide and accidental deaths.

Regarding suicide – approximately 63 % of firearm deaths are the result of suicide. A brief review of statistics informs us that **Suicide is the 10th** leading cause of death in the US for all ages groups (CDC). **Every day**, approximately 123 Americans die by suicide (CDC); and there is **one death** by suicide in the US every 12 minutes (CDC). In particular, we are seeing a rise in teen suicide, which in many instances is an impulsive act based on just one incident. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for ages 10-24, and is also on the rise in rural areas among older men. As the population ages, the prospect of older adults in homes with easy access to guns is a problem to be addressed.

While the number of accidental deaths by firearm is statistically low - approximately 4% - they are particularly tragic as they so often involve young children, who either die or accidentally kill someone else. Accidental gun deaths occur mainly in those under 25 years old. In 2014, 2,549 children (age 0-19) died by gunshot and an additional 13,576 were injured.

Clearly, easy access to firearms and careless storage of them are both serious contributors to the majority of firearm deaths. Consequently, it is crucial to pass sensible gun regulations that can lead to promoting gun safety.

—Judy Sherry and Renee Van Erp
LWVMO/JCP

Recent Contributions Received

Two members contributed a total of \$100 to the LWVMO Education Fund earmarked for LWV of Columbia/Boone County.

Contributions from members and friends are always welcome. You can send a donation to: **LWVMO, 8706 Manchester Road, Suite 104, St. Louis, MO 63144.**

Local League Reports

LWV-Kansas City/Jackson, Clay & Platte Counties

Candidate Forums

The run up to the 2019 Spring elections were uncommonly busy with forums. Six forums were scheduled between February 26 and March 26, with multiple co-sponsors and jurisdictions covered. Three school districts [Center, Hickman Mills and Kansas City Public Schools] school board candidates responded to audience questions displaying a fine knowledge of the challenges facing urban and inner circle suburban districts with stagnant or diminishing enrollments and an obvious earnest desire to help.

Ten of the 11 Kansas City Mayoral candidates took center stage at All Souls UU Church in a forum that was simulcast on co-sponsor KKFI and live streamed on the Climate Council's Facebook page. All Souls UUC and the Deportation Defense League also co-sponsored this event.

The District 4 City Council forum was also live streamed on the West Plaza Neighborhood Associations Facebook page at that event co-sponsored with eight other neighborhood associations. Our Raytown Mayoral and Alderman forum was held with long time co-sponsor Raytown Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.

All three candidates and audience members complimented the League on the process for the forum. Their comments reinforced the role of the LWV in our community to Make Democracy Work.

—Evelyn Maddox



In Memoriam

Sue Scholl was unique, colorful, and committed to many causes - particularly every citizen's right to register and to vote - to voice one's opinion - and to be heard. She passed away in January after a fall on the ice.

Sue mattered to our League - she marched and we followed. We had the pleasure of marching with her since 2004 - all of us. One of our newer members remarked, "Sue is connected with everyone!" That's because she worked all over Kansas City--indoors, outdoors, wherever potential voters were gathered. It was easy for voters to find her because she displayed what she stood for - it might have been the LWV t-shirt she was wearing, or maybe the League buttons pinned to her vest, or possibly the array of League stickers across the back of her car! Sue was proud to belong to the League of Women Voters and we are proud that she was one of us.

—LWV of Kansas City/Jackson, Clay & Platte Counties

(Local League Reports, continued on next page)
Deadline for next *Missouri Voter* - May 15

Local League Reports (continued)

LWV-SWMO

Candidate Forums

LWV-SWMO assisted with two candidate forums this spring. The best part of these two events was the partnerships with the various community organizations.

The first event was at the invitation of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority to help lead a Candidate Forum on Sunday, March 9, at the Turning Point Church. This was a great partnership we hope to continue. The other partners included the NAACP and Faith Voices Southwest Missouri.

The Sorority invited City Council and School Board Candidates. Answering questions were Council Candidates Amy Champlin, Jaye Owens, Mike Schilling and Andrew Lear. The School Board Candidates included Charles Taylor and Shurita Thomas-Tate. There was an excellent turn out of League Members.

The second event was the result of a partnership with the Neighborhood Association Council. All the candidates for the Springfield Public School Board participated in the forum. The event was on Sunday, March 17th, at Drury Findlay Student Center. Our moderator was Angie Snyder, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of Southwest Missouri. The forum was well attended with around thirty people in the gathering. Candidates were two incumbents, Dr. Alina Lehnert, Dr. Charles Taylor and first-time candidate Dr. Shurita Thomas-Tate. All the candidates have experience working in education.

Angie kept the forum running smoothly, using audience questions written on note cards to save time and repetition of questions. Questions were also submitted by Moms Demand Action and our local MNEA. Questions covered a broad range of issues from student test scores to use of building resources. There were also concerns expressed about school safety and increasing collaboration between administration and faculty and staff.

—Lorraine Sandstrom

LWV-Metro St. Louis

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* printed the LWV Voters Guide for the April 2 election. League volunteers delivered copies of the printed Voter's Guide to many public locations (libraries, community centers, senior living senior living facilities, and businesses).

Members Enjoy Centennial Tea

The League kicked off its 100th birthday celebration with a March 24 tea at the St. Louis Woman's Club. Other upcoming Centennial events include a Suffragist Tour of Bellefontaine Cemetery on Thursday, May 2, summer parades and a banquet Nov. 13 at the Sheldon.



The Metro St. Louis League created a 100th Anniversary Hundred Dollar Club to raise funds for Centennial activities. So far, the club has 74 members. They receive advance notice of all events and had half-price admission to the tea.

Photo: Nancy Miller and Louise Wilkerson, co-presidents, LWV Metro St Louis



Officers

President: Kathleen Boswell (Sedalia)

Vice President: Marilyn McLeod (Columbia)

Secretary: Louise Wilkerson (St. Louis)

Directors

Marge Bramer (Springfield)

Nancy Copenhaver (Moberly)

Debby Howard (St. Louis)

Evelyn Maddox (KC)

Carol Schreiber (Columbia)

Sharon Swon (Mexico)

Nominating Committee

Peggy Placier, Chair (Columbia)

Pauline Testerman (KC)

Elaine Blodgett (Columbia)

Executive Director: Jean Dugan

Office Assistant: Chantal Hoffsten

Historian and Voter Protection Coalition

Liaison: Linda McDaniel

LWVUS Board Liaison: Karen Nicholson

2019 CALENDAR

April 5: Centennial of Presidential Suffrage in Missouri

April 11: E.R.A. Rally—The Capitol, Jefferson City

April 16: Equity Action Day - Missouri Women's Network, at the Capitol, Jefferson City

May 3-4: Board Meeting and LWVMO State Convention, St. Louis

June 5: Centennial of Congress passing the 19th Amendment

July 3: Centennial of Missouri ratification of the 19th Amendment

Oct. 16-18: Centennial of Missouri League of Women Voters

Nov. 13: Centennial of St. Louis League

Dec. 11: Centennial of Columbia League

From LWV US:

Partisan Gerrymandering at the Supreme Court

Last month activists from across the nation gathered in front of the Supreme Court, as the Justices heard a set of three redistricting cases that could result in ending partisan gerrymandering across the nation.

Rucho v. League of Women Voters of North Carolina and its companion cases assert that partisan gerrymandering by both major parties violated voters' rights.

Banning partisan gerrymandering would make huge strides in restoring voters' faith in the electoral process. SCOTUS now has a huge opportunity to declare that, once and for all, politicians cannot choose their voters—voters must be free to choose who they want to represent them.



**Missouri Voter
League of Women Voters of Missouri
8706 Manchester Rd., Suite 104
St. Louis, MO 63144-2733**

LWVMO 64TH State Convention – Observer Registration Form

Local Presidents submit the names of delegates to the convention. Non-delegate observers are welcome (they may participate in all activities, workshops, and business, but not vote) and also need to be registered.

I am a current member of the _____ local League.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL _____ CELL PHONE: _____

Pay at lwvmissouri.org or send form with a check or money order for \$30. (Registration fee includes dessert reception and costume parade on Friday night, lunch on Saturday and all convention materials).

Send form by April 12, to: LWVMO, 8706 Manchester Rd. Suite 104, St. Louis, MO 63144

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Voice: 314-961-6869

Email: league@lwvmissouri.org