



METRO NEWS

FALL 2013

Vol. 35, No.4

LWVIS Theatre Party: a Big Success

League members, spouses and friends of the League enjoyed a fantastic production of Neil Simon's "The Good Doctor", delicious food, friendly conversation, and some took home some great buys from the silent auction at the October event at the New Jewish Theatre.

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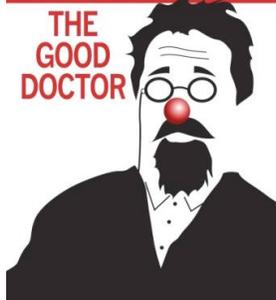
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NEIL SIMON



Complete financial results from the benefit will be included in the Winter issue of the Metro News.

Thank you to all who supported the League's Information Service major fund-raising event of the year.

Your tax-deductible contribution to LWVIS can be made at any time; just send your check to:

LWVIS
 8706 Manchester Rd,
 Ste. 104
 St. Louis, MO 63144

Thank you for your vital support!

Gun Violence & Reform Learn at Lunch Program: Nov. 11

The League of Women Voters of St. Louis will sponsor a Learn at Lunch Program on Gun Violence and Reform on Monday, Nov. 11, at 11:30 am, First Congregational Church Memorial Hall, Elm and Lockwood in Webster Groves.

Representatives of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America will speak. Please bring a lunch and drink; dessert will be provided. The event is free and open to the public. Invite interested friends and family.

More information LWV: 961-6869 or www.lwvstl.org

League Conducts St. Louis Housing Authority Elections

For the 10th year, the League conducted the election for the St. Louis Housing Authority Tenant Advisory Board elections on Nov. 1st at 12 polling places. We are pleased that the Housing Authority has entrusted us with this important responsibility. Tenant Advisory Boards are composed of residents who work with staff to provide better services and support for their constituents.

From the Presidents....

The St. Louis League has been busy this fall! We kicked off the 2013-14 year with a program on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Speakers from Washington University and Monsanto, and a southern Missouri farmer fielded questions from a crowd of 120 including a number of Sierra Club members and citizens who came out to hear the program. The discussion was lively; dinner and a new fundraising auction of unusual purses and their "innards" were enjoyed. Friends reconnected after the summer hiatus.

Our letter to the editor appeared on National Voter Registration Day, September 24th, in four newspapers. We researched four special election ballot issues in St. Louis County and posted a mini Voters Guide on our website. Our October units discussed the post-veto session of the Missouri legislature, the status of Voter Photo ID in Missouri, and what ballot initiatives will be collecting signatures soon.

Seven St. Louis League members went to Sedalia to meet with their sister Leagues from across the state, made presentations, and contributed to the success of the LWVMO Fall Conference.

On October 20th we sponsored our annual Theatre Party fundraiser featuring the New Jewish Theatre's production of Neil Simon's "The Good Doctor". In addition to the production, we had a successful silent auction featuring pottery art, tickets to cultural events, museum memberships and other donations from community institutions and businesses. All funds will go to the LWV Information Service.

Call the office if you'd like to add your expertise and time to volunteer for our important education work: 961-6869. We're busy!

Nov. 5th General Election

St. Louis County

EDMUNDSON- Prop. H hotel tax- 6/10 of one percent *

UPLANDS PARK -60% required
Prop. 1 - to dissolve the city

WOODSON TERRACE Prop. H hotel tax- 6/10 of one percent *

PATTONVILLE R-3 SCHOOLS

Prop. P to increase operating levy by \$.9972 to a \$5.1072*

* require simple majority

There are no elections in the City of St. Louis.

For more information on these ballot issues: www.lwvstl.org

Contributions to LWVIS from
Jeanne Morrel-Franklin and
Norma Jean Downey in memory
of Rachel Farr Fitch.
Jeanne Morrel-Franklin in honor
of Carol Portman.

INFORMATION about the AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

By Dianne Modrell, LWVSTL, Health Committee Chair

Enrollment for the Health Insurance Marketplaces has begun. **If enrollment is before December 15, 2013, the insurance coverage will begin in January 2014.** The first step for those eligible and interested in obtaining insurance on the Marketplace is to establish an account with www.healthcare.gov. or by calling 800-318-2596. This can be done now or anytime throughout the enrollment period that ends in March 2014. The enrollment date will determine when coverage would begin.

Before making a decision, shoppers should explore the possibilities on www.covermissouri.org. * Financial help might be available (up to 400% of Federal Poverty Level [FPL]**). Calculate what reimbursement, tax credit or help with the premium might be available. Find out where individual help may be available to help with a decision.

The Marketplace is designed for those who must purchase individual or small business insurance (enrollment in November if fewer than 50 employees). These policies have traditionally carried the highest premiums and sometimes without much payment for medical needs. They are intended to offer affordable options for the insurance coverage chosen.

Missouri's available plans are through Coventry or Blue Cross, and the insurance offered will include the 10 essential health care benefits required by the new law. There will be at least three types, or levels of coverage, on plans available from each insurance company in the Marketplace. No "platinum" plans are offered at this time. The choices determine the amount you pay at a level that would match the desired coverage. The total amount of money out of pocket paid is limited and is determined by income.

MO Medicaid Expansion is still "under construction".

Coverage through Medicaid is planned for those who can least afford market insurance (federal guidelines suggest up to 138% of FPL for 3 years of full federal reimbursement to the state) and those who do not have any insurance offered through their workplace. Missourians who do not earn enough to pay insurance for themselves and their family would benefit most from the full expansion.

Missouri Senate and House Interim Committees are trying to devise Medicaid Expansion for Missouri. They hope for a bill to be presented during the legislative session beginning January 2014. They are considering requests for a waiver from Health and Human Services (HHS) to cover those at less than the 138 % FPL. The waiver might include greater assistance to lower income families to purchase a private plan on the Insurance Marketplace. The waiver may still allow federal money to come back to Missouri for this coverage, but waivers take time to get through the federal process. Missouri legislators have already had three years to devise an alternative since the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (sometimes shortened to ACA and commonly called ObamaCare) was passed in 2009.

Implementation of the Insurance Marketplace has had technical difficulties, but access becomes easier each day. Missouri's decision on Medicaid Expansion will make a difference in access and affordability to many residents for health care needs. It may be advisable to sign up for the Insurance Marketplace after mid-October (Businesses in November). Enrollment systems will be more capable within a few weeks to handle applications since Missouri has opted to have federally run marketplaces for insurance.

NOTE: MEDICARE COVERAGE is not affected by the Insurance Marketplace.

** Example of FPL: 1 person at 300% FPL may earn \$34,470 a year.

League Seeks Collaboration with Women's Voices Organization

Recently 10 St. Louis League members attended a panel discussion on the Supreme Court Decision on the Voters Rights Act. Sponsored by Women's Voices for Social Justice, the meeting featured: Rita Heard Days, St. Louis County Democratic Elections Director and former state senator; Judge Judy Draper, Associate Circuit Judge St. Louis County, and Denise Lieberman, Senior Attorney with the Advancement Project's Voter Protection Program.

The panel explored the June US Supreme Court decision that invalidated a legislative formula that required some states to clear all voting changes in advance with the Justice Department or federal court means to voters in Missouri and around the country. In addition, Ms. Days talked about how actions of the St. Louis County Election Board affect the election process for voters.

The audience asked a number of questions about recent state laws that pose obstacles to voters and their experiences in St. Louis City and St. Louis County.

LWV Co-President Kathleen Farrell reviewed the LWV's Voter Protections work and suggested that the two organizations work together to protect voters rights and improve the election process.

METRO NEWS (USPS-400-810)

is published quarterly by the League of Women Voters Information Service, 8706 Manchester Rd., Ste. 104, St. Louis, MO 63144, 961-6869 Periodicals Postage paid at St. Louis, MO Subscription is \$1.00 per year. The dues members pay and contributors include \$1 for the cost of a subscription to the Metro News.

Postmaster: send address changes to Metro News, c/o League of Women Voters Information Service 8706 Manchester Rd., Ste. 104 St. Louis, MO 63144.

Agnes Garino, Editor

Earlier this year, long-time League member and past president of the Missouri and University City Leagues Carol Portman retired from her position as voter registration chair for the League. Carol was recently recognized by the League for her dedication to help particularly new citizens register to voter. The League voter registration for new citizens program received a Focus St. Louis "What's Right for the Region" award in 2005. League members have had a long commitment to voter registration. We've asked Carol to share her recollections of the League's involvement in voter registration efforts in the St. Louis area. As Carol explains, "It has been the most interesting experience she has encountered."

Thanks, Carol, for your fantastic dedication.- Editor

League: Registering Voters

In the 1970s, the Boards of Election Commissioners of St. Louis County and the City of St. Louis extended an invitation for members of the LWV of St. Louis to be deputized to register voters.

Initially LWV could register citizens only within St. Louis County or City, the county in which we were deputized. It was later extended so we could register either in the city or the county...later it was extended to the entire state. The registration forms and laws also changed.

When League members started registering voters, citizens had to be Missouri residents and at their current address for at least one year, and at least 21-years-old. The forms required the individual's mother's maiden name and their vocation/employment. **Throughout the years there have been a few changes in the registration process, but the LWV has never been able to get the oath to either define the word "suffrage" or change the word to "right to vote".**

Today individuals who want to register to vote state they are U. S. citizens and are at least 18- years-old or will be at the next election. No longer is the mother's maiden name or the individual's employment recorded, or if a resident of Missouri for at least one year.

In May 2000, the League was given permission by the Federal District Court to be present at Naturalization Ceremonies and to register new citizens to vote. (Because the federal court was in the process of moving to new facilities, the registrations were delayed until July 2001.) **This effort was made because Darwin (Carol's late husband) who as an immigration attorney learned LWV was registering new voters in other states gained permission to do so here.**

In the beginning of our trek when LWV was present to register voters, there was always a long line. We were asked to be at Target... we had to sit outside because there was a restriction prohibiting registration at a facility that sold alcohol.

by Carol Portman

Most of the time we were requested to be present at an activity, such as a community festival to register voters. U City Library began requesting our presence on the deadline day to register to vote at the upcoming election.

Our registration efforts had a number of inspiring and challenging moments. At a party for individuals from India -- in the days when we needed the mother's maiden name -- it was a challenge to fit the name in the small place provided. Another time at downtown Famous-Barr, Helen Weiss, a friend of the League and a store VP, learned its new store president was not a registered voter. That information led to FB hosting a voting registration drive at its downtown store. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. we registered 54 new voters and handled name or address changes for 19 people.

In the past 10 years voter registration at public events has decreased. LWV has been present at the request at school open houses, public libraries, community festivals and at various organizations with very few individuals registering to vote.

Since 2001 LWV has been very busy registering at naturalization ceremonies. There are on average three ceremonies a month. We go where the ceremony is -- usually at the Eagleton Courthouse downtown,-- but other venues also are used. Word gets around and the new citizens look for us. **Currently the League is registering 50% of the new citizens; for ceremonies with 50 individuals or less it is about two-thirds.**

Thus, over the years LWV's voter registration activity has evolved from being very busy at local community activities to concentrating on getting brand new citizens on the way to becoming good citizens registering them to vote.



League of Women Voters Information Service

8706 Manchester Rd., Ste 104

St. Louis, MO 63144-2733

400-810 USPS

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at St. Louis, MO

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UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)
Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. Publication Title METRO NEWS	2. Publication Number 4 0 0 - 8 1 0	3. Filing Date 9/27/2013
4. Issue Frequency QUARTERLY	5. Number of Issues Published Annually 4 (FOUR)	6. Annual Subscription Price \$1.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS INFORMATION SERVICE 8706 Manchester Ste. 104, Brentwood, St. Louis County, MO 63144-2733		Contact Person Julie Behrens Telephone (include area code) 314-961-6869
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS INFORMATION SERVICE 8706 Manchester Ste. 104, Brentwood, St. Louis County, MO 63144-2733		
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)		
Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS INFORMATION SERVICE 8706 Manchester Ste. 104, Brentwood, St. Louis County, MO 63144-2733		
Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Agnes Garino, League of Women Voters Information Service 8706 Manchester Ste. 104, Brentwood, St. Louis County, MO 63144-2733		
Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address) NONE		
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)		
Full Name	Complete Mailing Address	
League of Women Voters Information Service	8706 Manchester Ste. 104, Brentwood St. Louis County, MO 63144-2733	
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None		
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12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months <input type="checkbox"/> Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)		

13. Publication Title METRO NEWS	14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below Summer 2013	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	449	450
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		
(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	7	10
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	365	381
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	0	0
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	0	0
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))	372	391
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	45	42
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	32	17
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	0	0
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	0	0
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))	77	59
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)	449	450
g. Copies Not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))	0	0
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	449	450
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)	83%	87%
16. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Total circulation includes electronic copies. Report circulation on PS Form 3526-X worksheet.		
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the FALL 2013 issue of this publication. <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.		
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner <i>Agnes Garino, Editor</i>		Date 9/27/2013
I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).		