



The League of Women Voters of Southwest Missouri

September 2015 Newsletter

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

From the National Voter Registration Day website: "In 2008, 6 million American's didn't vote because they missed a registration deadline or didn't know how to register. In 2015, we want to make sure no one is left out. On September 22, 2015, volunteers, celebrities, and organizations from all over the country will "hit the streets" for National Voter Registration Day. This single day of coordinated field, technology and media efforts will create pervasive awareness of voter registration opportunities – allowing us to reach tens of thousands of voters who we could not reach otherwise."



Getting Involved

Our League is working with the City of Springfield's *Community Listen Zone Blitz/Civic Engagement Team* to identify needs in the Zone 1 Council area (the northwest quadrant of the city). One of the items of concern is that of low voter turnout in this area.

To help address that issue, we will host a Voter Registration Drive, specifically located in this zone, on National Voter Registration Day. **Locations and times will be announced soon.**

UPCOMING UNIT MEETINGS

September Unit Meetings

Unit meetings are starting up again this month. The September unit meetings will be **Tuesday, Sept 15th** at noon at Drury University Findlay Student Center and **Monday, Sept 21st** at 5:30pm at Nonna's South, 3512 S. National.

Note - **The Tuesday unit meets before the Monday unit this month because of the way the calendar falls with the 3rd Tuesday and the 3rd Monday.

Our local study committee will present an overview of the national study on *Amending the Constitution*. The national

study guide is attached for all members to review before the September unit meetings. It lists the consensus questions, along with the pros and cons for each question, so it's easy to review quickly to get an understanding of the study. [Constitutional Amendment Study Guide 2015](#)

From the attached Study Guide: "*This study of amending the U.S. Constitution is in three parts. The questions in Part I are to develop guidelines for evaluation constitutional amendment proposals. Part II asks about aspects of an Article V Constitutional Convention that may be important in conducting such a Convention. Part III relates to how the League might put these guidelines into practice and asks two overall balancing questions between process and positions.*"

October Unit Meetings

The October unit meetings will be **Monday, Oct. 19th** at 5:30pm at Nonna's South, 3512 S. National and **Tuesday, Oct. 20th** at noon at Drury University Findlay Student Center.

Plans are underway to secure a Constitutional Law speaker who can further address the topic of the national study on *Amending the Constitution* and answer any questions generated from the discussion at the September unit meetings.

November Unit Meetings

The November unit meetings will be **Monday, Nov. 16th** at 5:30pm at Nonna's South, 3512 S. National and **Tuesday, Nov. 17th** at noon at Drury University Findlay Student Center.

Naturalization Ceremony for New Citizens

**Wednesday, September 16, 2015 at Noon
Plaster Student Union on the MSU Campus**

There will be 50 new citizens introduced at this ceremony, with Magistrate Judge David Rush presiding. The League has helped with this ceremony for the past several years and will once again provide the new citizens the opportunity to register to vote, which is one of the first rights of becoming a U.S. Citizen.



We will take consensus at the November unit meetings on both the national study and position update topics. The consensus questions on the *Amending the Constitution* national study is due to the National League office by December 1, 2015. The consensus questions for the *Money in Politics* position update are due to the National League office by February 1, 2016.

GENERAL MEETING

Date/Time/Location TBA
Money in Politics (Campaign Finance)
National Position Update

“The Money in Politics national committee will conduct an update of the League’s position on campaign finance for the purpose of addressing the lack of member understanding and agreement as to whether financing a political campaign if protected speech under the First Amendment. The campaign finance position will be updated through a study and consensus process to consider: (1) the rights of individuals and organizations, under the First Amendment, to express their political views through independent expenditures and the finance of election campaign activities, and (2) how those rights, if any, should be protected and reconciled with the interests set out in the current League position.”

www.lwv.org

This is not a new study, but just an update on an existing League position and it is designed to be a one-meeting discussion. The consensus material and questions will be made available to League members by mid-October and will include a PowerPoint presentation. Our League will host a General Meeting in late October to view the PowerPoint presentation and discuss this position update.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Thursday, September 17, 2015
9:00am-3:30pm
Plaster Student Union (PSU),
3rd Floor Grand Ballroom, Missouri State University, 901 S. National Ave.

Missouri State University’s Civic Engagement Conference will provide an informative and though provoking look at the issues related to opportunity and democracy here in Springfield and in the United States.

Topics that will be discussed include economic opportunity and social mobility; increasing diversity and its impact on communities; the state of political and civic participation; and the ways our community has come together to address public health needs.

In an age where the influence of money on politics has grown exponentially and economic inequality is at record-high levels, this conference will explore democracy and self-governance. This conference is FREE and open to the public. For more information: [Conference on Civic Engagement - Public Affairs - Missouri State University](#)

If you have any questions, please contact Stacy Trewatha-Bach, MSU Public Affairs Support at (417) 836-8832 or by email at publicaffairssupport@missouristate.edu

VOTER GUIDE COMMITTEE

If you are interested in serving on the Voters’ Guide Committee for next year, contact Leslie Carrier at rlcarrier@sbcglobal.net.

We plan to get an early start after the first of the year to contact our previous sponsors and work on a redesign for the printed version. The November 2016 election will be here before we know it!

Upcoming Dates

September Unit Meetings:
Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2015
Noon, Drury University Findlay Student Center

Monday, Sept. 21, 2015
5:30pm
Nonna’s South, 3512 S. National

Naturalization Ceremony
Wednesday, Sept 16, 2015
Noon, Plaster Student Union Theater on the MSU Campus

Civic Engagement Conference
Thursday, Sept 17, 2015
9:00am-3:30pm, Plaster Student Union on the MSU Campus

National Voter Registration Day
Thursday, Sept 22, 2015
Location/Times TBD

October Unit Meetings:
Monday, Oct. 19, 2015
5:30pm
Nonna’s South, 3512 S. National

Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2015
Noon, Drury University Findlay Student Center

State League Fall Conference
Saturday, Nov 7, 2015
9:00am-3:00pm
Sedalia – State Fair Comm. College

November Unit Meetings
Monday, Nov. 16, 2015
5:30pm
Nonna’s South, 3512 S. National

Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2015
Noon, Drury University Findlay Student Center

STATE LEAGUE FALL CONFERENCE

Saturday, November 7, 2015

9:00am-3:00pm

Sedalia at State Fair Community College

We have several League members who have already expressed an interest in car-pooling to the annual State League Fall Conference held in Sedalia. This is a great opportunity to meet League members from across the state, hear about legislative priorities for the upcoming legislative session, and learn more about League initiative...not to mention spend the day with our own League members for a fun road trip!

More information will be provided in the October newsletter. We'd like to have two car loads of our members attend the conference, so if you are interested, please notify Leslie Carrier at rlcarrier@sbcglobal.net.

MISSOURI LEAGUE ADOPTS POSITION ON MARIJUANA

At the 2015 May State LWV Convention, members adopted the position on marijuana law reform from the League of Women Voters Columbia/Boone County by a vote of more than 2/3 of the delegates. A position from another League can be proposed for adoption at the State Convention, and, if approved by the delegates, allows the State League to add that item to the list of adopted positions at the state level. These positions were first adopted by the LWV Columbia/Boone County in 2006, which appointed a study committee on marijuana law reform.

Marijuana Position:

- Support legislation which allows marijuana for medical treatments when approved by a physician.
- Support moving marijuana from Schedule I on the Controlled Substance Act List to a schedule that allows physicians to prescribe it.

- Support measures to allow patients to legally obtain marijuana for medical use.
 - Support the continuation and expansion of research on the effects of the marijuana plant on the human body.
 - Support adequate funding for effective prevention education and treatment programs and an emphasis on marijuana abuse treatment programs in preference to punishment and incarceration.
 - Support the use of drug courts and law reforms that reduce penalties for possessing small amounts of marijuana.
 - Support treating possession as one of the lowest law enforcement priorities.
 - Support efforts to keep marijuana out of the hands of our children, to remove the criminal element from the distribution process, and to advocate measure to manage the production of marijuana in order to control its purity and strength.
- (2006, LWV Columbia/Boone County)

Mental Health Report and Update

By Maggie Castrey

The League has completed a two-year study of health accessibility and affordability for adults in Greene County. We are moving into the advocacy stage by convening a Regional Mental Health Council requested by study participants. League members will serve as facilitators until the council is robust enough to continue on its own. Co-chairs for this phase of advocacy are Maggie Castrey, Lisa Hall and Joye Norris.

We surveyed study participants and others to determine the structure and purpose of the council; 28 providers or community advocates responded. The plan is to meet monthly to address issues of importance to the participants, including bringing in speakers from other communities, developing procedures for the operation of the council, creating web-based or printed lists of services and resources and increasing access to affordable medications.

In the process of sharing information among providers, participants hope to also educate the community about needs, develop a formal referral system, increase available housing, investigate ways to reduce documentation required to receive services, and increase the number of people available for follow-up.

The committee has released the Mental Health report to all the providers involved in the study, links to the summary and full report are listed here:

[Study of Availability and Accessibility of Mental Healthcare Services for Adults in Greene County Executive Summary](#)

[Study of Availability and Accessibility of Mental Healthcare Services for Adults in Greene County Full Report](#)