



This Sixth Year has been a transitional one for Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice. Our President for the first five years, Barbara Finch, decided she was ready to focus her energies on other aspects of the organization. Members were wary because Barbara had set such a high standard that we feared we could not successfully fill the position. But one of us had to take the job, and I reluctantly agreed to serve for one year. I hoped that a different style might show our organization that we could continue to thrive even without such an industrious leader as Barbara. We have continued to be a unique organization fueled by the energies of many women who want to take steps toward making our society more just.

We also made a structural change during the past year. We had been functioning with two continuing task forces focused on issues we chose as special interests: Health Care and the Environment. We found that structure getting a bit stale as it kept us from finding new areas where we might have some impact.

In July of 2010, we asked staff members from Jobs with Justice to give us advocacy training so that we could become more effective change agents. Following the training we formed a committee to define the criteria by which we would decide which advocacy projects Women's Voices would support.

Since then, we have selected advocacy projects that are meaningful for society and for Women's Voices; our efforts promote social justice and will have a concrete impact on people's lives. The projects can involve many of our members and they have measurable outcomes.

The first project we selected is a continuation of our work on health care, working to secure quality, accessible, affordable health care for all. This project provides information sessions for citizens to find out what is and what is not a part of the federal health care plan. The second is an initiative to increase revenue for the state of Missouri by encouraging the state to enact the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement. More information on these initiatives is on the Advocacy page of the web site.

Our leaders and what they did to strengthen our organization in 2010-11:

President: Joanne Kelly Good Vice President: Jeanne Bubb

Secretary: Shelly Lemons and Judy Martin Finch

Treasurer: Mary Clemons

Board of Directors: Ruth Ann Cioci, Elitta DeArmond, Jane Cocalis, Barbara Finch,
Judy Martin Finch, Shelly Lemons, Barbara Richter, Ann Ross, Ann Ruger

*Our organization has been successful because of the talents and efforts
of women in key positions. They include:*

The Advocacy Committee, comprised of Jeanne Bubb, Linda Carey, Ruth Ann Cioci, Mary Clemons, Barbara Finch, Chery Green, Deanna Jent, and Barbara Richter, worked to develop criteria for deciding which efforts to submit to the Board for its approval. They continue to select projects based on these criteria.

Members of the Board of Directors are elected or appointed to serve for a year at a time. The Board sets policy for Women's Voices and wrestles with the issues we continue to face. The members attend quarterly board meetings, program meetings, and accept special assignments to guide and organize the work of Women's Voices. Several members who served the Board in 2010 and 2011 are leaving it with this meeting. They include Ruth Ann Cioci, Elitta DeArmond, Judy Martin Finch, Shelly Lemons, Ann Ross and Ann Ruger.

Mary Clemons has served as treasurer for all six years Women's Voices has been in existence. Her thoroughness and attention to detail have served us well.

Jane Cocalis took over the monthly e-newsletter without a hitch. Her editions were timely, interesting and correct as to details.

Barbara Finch has served as Program Chairperson for the past year. Our monthly program meetings use the expertise of activists and professionals from around our city and region to inform us of the things they and their organizations are accomplishing. Barbara and her committee have provided us with a year of thought provoking programs.

Chery Green continues as our webmaster. We are proud of the timeliness and comprehensiveness of the web site. Members, subscribers, and interested people can see what we have done and are doing. Our position papers are posted. All of our past programs and our meeting minutes are also there.

Amy Smoucha, WV member and staff member with Jobs with Justice is our continuing inspiration. Through her special kind of leadership we have been kept informed and active in our community in so many ways.

In 2010-11, in collaboration with others, we:

- Marched in the St. Louis Pride Parade for the sixth year.
- Toured the St. Louis Holocaust Museum with guide, Jerry Koenig, survivor.
- Marched in Webster Groves July 4 parade with Missouri Health Care for All, handing out informational flyers about the Affordable Health Care Act.
- Sponsored the showing of a documentary by Sandra Pfeifer about the 1919 riots in East St. Louis.
- Cosponsored a well-attended, informational session with 11 other groups on the facts of the Affordable Health Care Act at the Kirkwood Baptist Church.
- Attended a production of “Crumbs from the Table of Joy” at the invitation of member Deanna Jent, artistic director of the Mustard Seed Theatre. Forty members and friends were inspired by this story of two teen-age girls in Brooklyn in the 1950’s dealing with racism and the loss of their mother.
- Cosponsored the 2010 Candidate Forum on Jobs, Energy & the Environment moderated by KWMU’s Don Marsh at the Ethical Society.
- Joined 60 other Missourians at a legislative committee hearing on the Affordable Health Care Act. Four WV members testified on some of its benefits.
- Held a holiday party for children in the after-school center of Beyond Housing in Pagedale. Member Dee Ban played music and sang with the children. We also brought household items and prepared 26 baskets for new homeowners of the Beyond Housing program.
- Joined with other St. Louisans in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration in the Old Court House, site of the Dred Scott decision.
- Attended a round table discussion with State Senator Eric Schmitt to urge him to work with us in supporting the Affordable Health Care Act.
- Met with State Senator John Lamping to inform him of the issues which are of most interest to us and find out which bills might come before the Senate.
- Reminded readers, through our excellent website’s “Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down Awards,” which people and organizations were promoting social justice.
- Were represented by Mary Clemons at a discussion on Missouri budget cuts. She asked about mental health cuts and mentally ill citizens being jailed due to facilities loss.
- Were represented by Mary O’Reilly at a Washington, D.C. Rally to Restore Sanity (civility in government.)

Many Thanks to Those Who Spoke to Women's Voices this Year:

Arthur H. Lieber presented a variety of progressive ideas to improve our state and federal political processes.

Terry Jones, PhD, professor of political science, UMSL; **Kathleen Sullivan Brown, PhD**, assoc. professor of ed. leadership and policy studies, UMSL; **Michael Jones**, St. Louis County Government senior policy advisor; **Jeff Rainford**, chief of staff to St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay; and State Senator **Maria Chappelle-Nadal** of District 14, gave us a wealth of understanding of some of the issues, problems and possibilities of merging city/county functions.

Rob Swearingen, consumer affairs attorney, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri; **Robin Acree**, executive director, Grassroots Organizing, Mexico, MO; **Fenny Dorsey**, organizer, Grassroots Organizing; and State Representative **Rory Ellinger** talked about the exploitation of the poor through pay day lending in Missouri.

Pamela Sumners, Esq., Executive Director of NARAL-Pro-Choice Missouri talked about the assault to women's health in Missouri related to family planning.

Kate Bruggemann, Kim Barge and **Kirsten Dunham**, from Paraquad, described its philosophy of independent living for the disabled. **Kerri Morgan**, a young woman who has been in a wheelchair since she was one year old, described Paraquad's role in her life.

Ruth Ehresman, director of Health and Budgetary Policy, Missouri Budget Project, detailed some of Missouri's budget problems and possible helpful measures.

Chris Krehmeyer, President and CEO of Beyond Housing, described how his organization is one of the leading providers of housing and support services for low-income families and homeowners in the St. Louis area.

Respectfully Submitted
Joanne Kelly Good, President,
Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice