

# V O T E R

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*The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization of women and men of every age, race, background and political belief. Through more than 1200 local Leagues, state Leagues and the national organization, League members work to promote citizen action on local, state, and national issues.*

## CITY-COUNTY STUDY BEGINS

The City-County Consolidation study committee, after its second meeting, is proceeding carefully. Consolidation has proven quite a volatile issue in other cities that have considered the issue—Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS; Shawnee County/Topeka. Looking for enough (but not too much) information, the committee hopes to do a study giving public officials suggested parameters for any official study conducted later. At the same time, the committee hopes to avoid such a complex study that it proves unwieldy or alienates public officials who might then block further study.

Any consolidation effort should be fair (in taxation and services) to all citizens, county or city. Whether consolidation is a net benefit to all citizens is a difficult call, and study results will vary widely among Kansas cities and counties, according to Sandy Jacqot, lead counsel for The League of Kansas Municipalities.

The committee has several tasks. First they are compiling a list of job positions at

both the city and county. Second they are contacting other Kansas LWV chapters who have undertaken similar studies. Additionally, they will set criteria to weigh advantages and disadvantages of consolidated government and services. In January, they will hold a public forum. In February/March, they will draft consensus questions and get League members' responses. By April, they will formulate recommendations.

David Norlin chairs the committee. Other members thus far include John Divine, Mary Kerstetter, Marge Mintun, Ted Mintun and Jan Mendell. Two others are considering joining, and other participants are welcome and wanted. If you might be interested, please contact David : 825-7847 or [davidnor@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davidnor@sbcglobal.net), (email after Nov. 5 or so—computer problems).

The committee meets next on Wednes-

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# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This week a friend and I were discussing **Supreme Court Nominees** and our discussion moved to our concerns about civil and human rights and the inevitable "Backlash" Susan Faludi described in her book of the same name years ago. As civil rights are achieved, there is an inevitable backlash to try and take them away.

As Dr. King reminded us, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor, it must be demanded by the oppressed."

My thoughts went to my niece, Ryan, who lives in Massachusetts. She is a beautiful twelve-year-old bi-racial young lady with many talents. One of her passions is ice hockey. She plays on a team made up mostly of boys, but she is one of the stars. I think it's great. My sister is sometimes less enthusiastic, since she has to get up at 4:30 in the morning to get Ryan to practice.

My friend and I discussed all the woman and men who fought, struggled and died for the rights it takes for one small girl to play ice hockey, or to go to school or to someday vote, or to run a company, or to run a nation.

All the struggles of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and all who fought and fight for equal rights for woman; Rosa Parks, Dr. King, and all who fought and fight for equal rights for all, Gloria Steinem, Ellie Smeal, Patricia Ireland, Billie Jean King, and all who fought and fight for Title IX and rights for woman to have equal access to sports and other programs in educational and professional settings.

Here we are at a crossroads, again. As we contemplate Supreme Court justices, elected officials, school boards, we can either be energized to continue the fight for justice, or we can be defeated. It would be so easy to let it go, until I think of that little kid who just wants to play ice hockey. —Gina McDonald

**Gina McDonald**

## CALENDAR

### NOVEMBER 2005

- 1 Lunch and Learn
- 17 Board Meeting

### DECEMBER 2005

No Board Meeting  
Happy Holidays!

### JANUARY 2006

- 10 Lunch and Learn
- 19 Board Meeting

### FEBRUARY

- 14 Lunch and Learn
- 16 Board Meeting

### MARCH

- 14 Lunch and Learn
- 16 Board Meeting

### JUNE

10-13 National Convention,  
Minneapolis, MN

## HOW TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

Mary Frances Hogg reminds us to keep this contact information handy:

### GOV. KATHLEEN SEBELIUS

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Office of the Governor  
300 SW 10th Ave., Ste. 212S  
Topeka, KS 66612-1590  
877-579-6757 (Toll free)  
785-296-6240 (Topeka)

### SEN. PAT ROBERTS

[http://Roberts.senate.gov/  
email\\_pat.html](http://Roberts.senate.gov/email_pat.html)  
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316-263-0416 (Wichita office)

### SEN. SAM BROWNBACK

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CMEmailMe.html](http://www.senate.gov/~brownback/CMEmailMe.html)  
202-224-6521 (DC)  
316-264-8066 (Wichita office)

### REP. JERRY MORAN

[www.house.gov/moranks01/  
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## LUNCH & LEARN, November 1 Health Care Staffing Shortages

### COMING THIS TUESDAY!

Emma Doherty, Director of Emergency Services at Salina Regional Health Center and past Salina League president, presents the health care challenges that looming staff shortages are bringing to the Salina community and all Americans.

Emma is a registered nurse with over three decades of experience at SRHC. She is vice chair of the North Central Kansas Regional Trauma Council, is involved with the Kansas Emergency Nurses Association, is past president of the Kansas State Nurses Association and the Kansas Organization of Nurse Leaders, and was elected

to the national Congress on Nursing Practices in 2004.

LUNCH & LEARN is held at St. John's Lutheran Church, corner of Seventh Street and Mulberry, downstairs in Lantz Hall. You may park on the street or in the south parking lot.

Please join us, and bring your questions and concerns.

## RECENT L&Ls FEATURE ART CENTER and CHILD ADVOCACY

Fall's first Lunch & Learn September 13 introduced Salina Art Center's new director, Heather Ferrell, who expressed great enthusiasm for Salina and high hopes for the future of the Art Center. Following Heather, Mexican artist Tania Candiana spoke of the "quilt" of food she is developing to hang in the Art Center window—vacuum-packed servings of the favorite foods of Salina residents. The current "Eating" exhibit opens a dialogue on art and food with local citizens.

On October 11, Assistant County Attorney Mary Thrower described the work of the Child Safety and Permanency Task Force. The statewide group meets to analyze youth interaction with the court system. With Mary's help and new grant money, Salina is starting programs giving young people alternatives to detention.

## Videos of LUNCH & LEARNs Available

Salina citizens have seen local Lunch & Learn programs replayed on Salina Access Cable Television. Now Access Cable has cooperated with the Salina League of Women Voters to give us those programs on VHS video tape. Nine of the programs are now available to check out for \$5.00 each. The board has set a two-week borrowing time limit.

Each video costs the league \$15 to purchase from Access Cable, but the \$5 fee simply covers the cost of mailing the video to the borrower.

Topics go back as far as 2003. The Salina League is making the videos available for rental not only by local members but also by other Leagues around the state who may be interested in starting programs like our Lunch & Learns.

Bill Powell will store the disks and oversee mailing and distribution. He is at 785-823-8041, wbpowell@ksu.edu.

Video topics include:

- Is There a Housing Shortage In Salina? February 11, 2003 [1 hour 2 minutes]. Panel: Alan Smith, Tom Wilbur, Anne Rollins, Dean Andrews, Tom Mulhern.
- The Impact of the Kansas State Budget—March 11, 2003 [41 minutes]. Panel: Gina McDonald, Mindy Kramer, Anne Grevas.
- Medical Services for the Poor—March 9, 2004 [1 hour 4 minutes]. Panel: Emma Doherty, Yvonne Gibbons, Anne Jung, Wanda Esping.
- Juvenile Justice in Salina—September 21, 2004 [1 hour]. Panel: Dexter Eggers, Anne Grevas, Mary Thrower.
- Changes at SRS—October 19, 2004 [1 hour 1 minute]. Panel: Gina McDonald, Julie Lemons.
- Salina Arts & Humanities Commission—November 9, 2004 [52 minutes]. Presenter: John Highkin.
- Assistive Technology through OCC—January 11, 2005 [57 minutes]. Panel: Connie Eddy, Lisa Short, Nancy Stork.
  - Salina School System—February 30, 2005 [43 minutes]. Presenter: Dr. Rob Winter.
  - Candidates Forum—October 19, 2004 [2 hours 43 minutes].

## STATE LEAGUE MENTAL HEALTH STUDY: Why is it needed?

**The LWWK has never undertaken a study of mental health care, and members have determined an urgent need to do so now. Why now?**

**First**, our current economic environment threatens social services funding. For example, the Kansas Legislative Coordinating Council recently appointed a Special Committee on Medicaid Reform. The findings of this committee will affect those who rely on Medicaid to pay for mental health care. Experts have estimated that nearly 106,000 persons with serious mental illness lived in Kansas in 2000. This vulnerable and stigmatized segment of our population lacks a strong political voice, yet can incur significant costs to the community.

**Second**, we turn to the history of the mental health system. Over the past 30 years, and especially since 1990 when the Legislature passed the Mental Health Reform Act, Kansas has worked toward deinstitutionalization of people with serious mental illness. This shifted funding and accountability from state hospitals to community mental health centers (CMHCs). While integration into mainstream society is an admirable goal, it appears that service providers are struggling to meet all of the needs at the local level. Furthermore, community hospitals are closing

inpatient psychiatric units, and the three remaining state hospitals are currently at or near capacity. Ultimately it is the obligation of the State to serve patients whose acute needs cannot be met in local communities. One of the major issues concerning future requirements of the public mental health system is how to determine state hospital bed needs.

**Third**, we look at the social consequences of deinstitutionalization. Nationwide, the mental health care system has been called a "shambles," with individuals experiencing high levels of unemployment, homelessness and criminal incarceration. Unfortunately, Kansas is no exception. Lack of appropriate services and resources in our state has been implicated in lengthening of children's stay in the foster care system, incarceration of adult and juvenile offenders with mental illness, and the inability of service providers to deal effectively with individuals in crisis. A good system should help reduce de-

**The League's understanding and involvement in mental health issues has the potential to contribute significantly to the public good.**

pendency on costly emergency services, even as it reduces poverty and homelessness among individuals with mental illness. It should reduce rates of incarceration, support healthy recovery and strengthen families. The social consequences of inadequate care are such that the efficacy of the mental health care system influences all citi-

zens, regardless of whether they are directly affected by mental illness.

**Fourth**, the State itself recognized that the mental health care system requires attention. In 2001, SRS took the proactive step of developing a five-year strategic plan for system improvement. In 2004, the Governor designated a Stakeholder Planning Council to work with government entities to refine the plan and improve services. These groups are working actively with the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, a national transformation program that released its first report in 2003.

The demonstrated interest of our state officials in assessing and improving services suggests that the League's understanding and involvement in mental health issues has the potential to contribute significantly to the public good.

**We have identified two general study questions:**

- 1) Are sufficient services available statewide to meet the diverse needs of individuals with mental illness?
- 2) Are the medical treatments, therapies and supports employed in Kansas the most current and effective options available?

The State League has two years to find answers to these questions, and local League members from around the state will be part of the effort. If you would like to help, please contact Gina McDonald, [ginamcd@aol.com](mailto:ginamcd@aol.com).

[Information for this article is taken from *The Kansas Voter*, September 2005, newsletter for the League of Women Voters of Kansas.]

By Ernestine Krehbiel

The non-partisan Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice (president, Jack Focht) along with League of Women Voters of Kansas president Janis McMillen and members of other Leagues around the state are working to maintain the quality of judicial selection in Kansas.

In the 1950s, to get away from smoke filled rooms of political machines controlling judgeships, Kansas adopted the current plan (called then the Missouri plan). An independent, nine-member judicial nominating commission (five of the members must be lawyers, the rest are members at large) checks backgrounds and references and interviews candidates for state supreme court and the court of appeals positions. Under this "merit-based" system of selecting justices, the commission, working behind closed doors, nominates up to three finalists. The governor then selects a justice from among nominees.

This system has served Kansas well for half a century. It was even adopted by over half of the district (county) courts in the state, including Saline County. Only 14 districts (including Sedgwick County) have partisan elections of district judges.

But the independent judiciary is currently under attack. Groups who disagree with decision by the courts respond by calling courts "activist." Their campaign against the courts has four prongs.

**Attack 1. AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO HAVE LEGISLATURE CONFIRM JUDGES.**

They want to change the constitution to require legislative approval of the governor's appointment. They argue that if it is good enough for the US courts, we should have it in Kansas. However, unlike US justices who serve lifetime appointments, each Kansas judge is up for a retention vote in the election following the appointment and every four years after that. There is also a maximum age of 70 years.

Attorney General Phill Kline, who backs the amendment, said: "That closed nature of the process and the imbalance of power invites collusion and the promotion of individual agendas."

Amendment opponents maintain that confirmation would return to the selection process the kind of backroom wrangling that prompted the change to the merit-selection system a half century ago.

"[This amendment] will not only put politics back on the 50-yard line, it will put it up in the executive suites," said former Kansas Supreme Court Justice Fred Six.

Jack Focht, a Wichita lawyer, former president of the Kansas Bar Association, and current president of Kansas Appleseed Center, said arguments by amendment proponents boiled down to personal dislike for rulings by the Supreme Court on constitutionality of death penalty or school finance law.

"I haven't heard people say, other than their unhappiness with these two decisions, that the system isn't working, that we're not getting good candidates ... and that we don't have good, smart, capable judges."

**Attack 2: CHANGE THE SYSTEM TO ELECT JUDGES BY POPULAR VOTE.**

Other states, like Texas, choose judges by political campaign for election, which is expensive and results in judges who are politically affiliated and therefore not independent. Often judicial candidates are forced to campaign on single issues that may be irrelevant to the matters they will address as state judges (e.g., state judges cannot rule on abortion). Moreover, personal contributions to judges' campaigns can affect the judge's objectivity.

The Appleseed Center finished an in-depth study of the role that partisan judicial elections of district court judges plays in the Sedgwick County judiciary and how the politicking required by partisan elections affects the district bench. This 12-page study can be viewed online at [www.appleseeds.net/ks/ACF29.pdf](http://www.appleseeds.net/ks/ACF29.pdf).

**Attack 3: LAUNCH LAST MINUTE ATTACK ADS IN A RETENTION ELECTION AGAINST A TARGETED JUDGE .**

Judges cannot campaign during a retention election. So an attack ad, especially one that comes the week before an election, leaves the judge vulnerable with no way to fight back.

Money for these attack ads has come from large out-of-state groups. This is a nation-wide effort to control courts at the grass-roots and state level. Labeling a judge an "activist judge" implies that the judge "makes laws not just decisions."

**Attack 4: AMEND THE CONSTITUTION TO PROHIBIT THE COURTS FROM SPECIFYING DOLLAR AMOUNTS IN STATE LAWSUITS.**

This attack has been raised by those who don't agree with the state supreme court's decision on appropriate funding of education. They aim to amend the constitution to prevent the Courts from telling the legislature how much money to award in any judgment.

A legislator from Leavenworth, Marti Crow, gave an excellent analogy for why this is a bad idea. She asks: How would you like to sue someone, win, but then let the person you sued decide how much you would get. No, she says, the judge must be able to say what the amount of damages are. So if the state of Kansas is sued, the independent judiciary that is not controlled by partisan politics sets the damages. The US Supreme Court ruled in a Virginia case that a court can award financial remedy to the plaintiff against a government even if taxes must go up to cover it (a civil rights case; legislators argued that they didn't have enough money to integrate schools).

**LEGITIMATE PROBLEMS THAT MUST BE REMEDIED:**

1. Most people do not know how the Kansas judicial system of appointments works. Even the state legislators do not understand. [Go to [www.ajs.org/js/KS\\_methods.htm](http://www.ajs.org/js/KS_methods.htm) for an explanation.]
2. There is currently no real way for a voter to evaluate whether a judge should be retained or not when the name is on the ballot for retention every four years. [There might be a role for the Kansas LWV in helping to develop a fair score card or presentation of groups support or not for different judges.]
3. In districts where judges are elected, the cost of a judgeship campaign influences who becomes a judge.

**BOOK WOMEN MUST HELP LEAD THE WORLD REVIEW**
***Closing the Leadership Gap: Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World* © 2004 (Viking Press)**

In August, 2005, we celebrated 85 years of votes for women. It's been a time to marvel over how far women have advanced. So many "firsts" have gone by—first woman in space, first woman on the Supreme Court, first female U.S. secretary of state, and first (and now second) woman governor of Kansas. Women are doctors, lawyers, corporate CEOs. There is nothing women cannot do.

We have a sense of satisfaction in the steady progress of women toward equality.

Into this satisfied mindset steps Marie C. Wilson and her riveting book *Closing the Leadership Gap*.

Counting up the number of women elected to national office, she tells us that America ranks sixtieth in the world, at an underwhelming 14 percent, behind Sierra Leone and tied with Andorra, far behind India and South Africa. At the state level, 20 percent of political leaders are women nationwide—with no increase in the last ten years. At this rate, estimates are that women will reach political parity with men in about two centuries.

Our first reaction may be this: Women have too much sense to run for office. The shameless self promotion needed for cam-

paing often seems foreign to women. And yet our lives are being governed by those who run, get elected, and then make the laws and decisions that run the country and the world. Wilson's subtitle, *Why Women Can and Must Help Run the World*, hints at this issue. If women had a larger share of political power, would the world be a better place? Wilson gives a resounding yes.

There are startling revelations in the book. In one study, a diverse audience was shown campaign ads by successful national male and female candidates. The audience members held dials they turned up or down to record the effectiveness or strength of leadership portrayed in different parts of the ads.

From the moment each ad started and the candidate's face appeared, the study revealed that if the face was a man, the dials went up. If the face was a woman, the dials stayed steady or went down. Wilson explains, "Men had the instant advantage, based on their maleness."

A "leader" in the minds of most of us, even us women, conjures up the image of a man. Yet we all know women leaders. Wilson finds that women tend to lead differently than men, in a more cooperative style, with a greater emphasis on inclusiveness, communication and empathy. Women often learn how to lead from their roles as mothers and family members. In the 1980's, corporations spent millions trying to adopt what became known as the "Japanese" model of management, which actually came from a 1920's book by an American woman, extolling the virtues of

**Numbers matter. A few women in power is good, but a lot of women is much better.**

collaboration, power sharing and interconnectedness.

Wilson, who helped start "Take Our Daughters To Work Day" in the 1990's, recently founded a program called "The White House Project," dedicated to advancing women in leadership positions, including the U.S. presidency. Her book asks, How can women overcome their perceived leadership "disadvantage" and succeed in political races?

She analyzes campaign ads. Women who have won their races, including Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius, did so with four common elements:

- 1) They wore formal clothing—no frilly blouses or casual looks.
- 2) They spoke, using active language, about issues not normally associated with women—crime and the economy are two examples.
- 3) They were photographed in impressive surroundings—behind a large desk or in front of the statehouse.
- 4) They discussed their credentials to show proof of their competence.

But aside from the ads, women must first decide to run, and then majorities of citizens must vote for them.

One of Wilson's primary and repeated points is that "numbers matter." A few women in power is good, but a lot of women is much better. Only then can women's values become more than just a novelty. And women can be themselves, can act in ways that feel natural to them in their positions, no longer having to fit in as "one of the boys."

Wilson calls for altering the culture, creating an environment hospitable both to women's leadership and men's domestic involvement. "Our future depends on the leadership of women," she says, "not to replace men, but to transform our options alongside them."

*Closing the Leadership Gap* is a manageable 170 pages with lots of white space, readable in a few nights before bed. But prepare to have your sleep interrupted

## OBSERVER REPORTS

### BITS & PIECES FROM THE OBSERVERS

#### SCHOOL BOARD, September 27:

The new LIFT (Loan Initiative for Future Teachers) program from the Salina Education Foundation provides forgivable college loans of up to \$5000 per year to Saline County residents who become teachers and return to USD 305 to teach. The first recipient will be in spring, 2006. In the future, four to six students per year may receive LIFT loans. Criteria for selection: GPA, references, willingness to teach in a high demand area, etc.

The board took comments on high school math curriculum. More information will be presented at the Oct. 11 Board meeting. A copy of the initial proposal is at [https://www.usd305.com/news/Math\\_clarification.html](https://www.usd305.com/news/Math_clarification.html).

Summaries of Board meetings are at <https://www.usd305.com/depart/boardbriefsnew.html> under the heading "Board of Education Briefs".

#### LIBRARY BOARD, October 20:

Two \$1000 grants were received from the Greater Salina Community Foundation, one to bring an author to town, one for CLASS scholarships.

727 people are participating in CLASS courses. Eleven new courses will begin in November. New spring courses are under discussion.

The Library has the following new facilities: new boiler, new art exhibit in the south lobby, a large storage area in the basement, and a preschool computer in the youth services area.

Library patrons are being asked to provide their email addresses. Those who do will receive the following services beginning January 2006: a pre-due notice three days before an item is due, a second notice on the due date. Patrons may also elect to receive other library information via email, including the quarterly newsletter.

—Mike Wilson

## LEAGUE NEWS AROUND THE STATE

A look at what other local Leagues are doing:

**Emporia** took touch screen voting machines to the local high school and used them for the annual Winter Sports King and Queen election.

**Great Bend** is in the middle of a two-year study of Barton County's drug problem—including how the problem is perceived by local citizens, and possible solutions to the problem.

**Johnson County** just finished a celebration of the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's right to vote, including presentations by National Public Radio correspondent, Susan Stamberg.

**Wichita** stretched its 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of women's suffrage over several months. In August, Nancy Kassebaum Baker addressed "The Challenge of Change." In October, author and Newsweek contributing editor Eleanor Clift spoke on her recent books, *Founding Sisters and the 19th Amendment*, and *Madame President: Shattering the Last Glass Ceiling*.

## NATIONAL LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

### OBSERVERS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Since 1945 and before, the League of Women Voters has been one of the leading supporters of the United Nations in the United States. The League has official NGO (Nongovernmental Organization) status at the UN and is represented by two official UN Observers. Among other duties, the League's UN Observers update LWV members and the public through the year about UN activities.

In 1945, at the UN Charter Conference, the League was invited by President Truman to serve as a consultant to the U. S. delegation. Since that time, the League has continued its presence at the United Nations through its one official and two alternate observers. In July 1997, the League was granted Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social

Council (ECOSOC), which provides the opportunity to make interventions on issues the League supports.

**Consultative status allows the League to:**

- make formal oral or written statements to the UN
- be consulted by the UN in areas which the League has expertise

**The current UN Observers for the League are:**

- Doris R. Schapira, Main Observer
- Patty Day, first Alternate Observer
- Margery Cohen, second Alternate Observer

Learn more about the League's UN Observers under "Issues: International Relations" at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org).

### THE CASE OF THE MISSING KEYS

According to the Salina Post Office, the Salina League has checked out seven keys to its post office box over the past few years. However, in an informal survey, the board has accounted for only about four of those keys. If it occurs to you that you have one of the missing keys, please contact one of the board members.

Help us solve the mystery!

**League of Women Voters of Salina**

PO Box 502

Salina, KS 67402-0502

**JOIN US**

**MAKE PROGRESS HAPPEN by joining the League of Women Voters of Salina or renewing your League Membership. It is a perfect time to join the League to ensure you do not miss the action. Please take a moment now to become a member of The League of Women Voters of Salina.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes, I want to add my voice to yours by joining the League at the following level:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Single Membership (circle one)
  - Contributing Level* \$50.00
  - Sustaining Level* \$40.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family Membership (circle one)
  - Contributing Level* \$75.00
  - Sustaining Level* \$60.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Student/supported or other \$20.00

\_\_\_\_\_ **I am unable to join the League at this time, but enclosed is my contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.**

For more information, please contact:

**Mary Anne Powell, Membership Chairperson  
1022 Funston, Salina, Kansas 67401  
Telephone: 823-8041 Email: wbpowell@ksu.edu**

*Make checks payable to: **The League of Women Voters of Salina**, and mail to **PO Box 502, Salina, KS 67402-0502.***