



League of Women Voters®  
Austin Area

Voter

www.lwvaustin.org 512.451.6710

April 2012

Volume 16 # 8

## Calendar

**Mon., Apr. 2,** 6:30 - 9 pm, Board Meeting, Community Room, Central Market, N. Lamar.

**Fri., Apr. 13 - Sun., Apr. 15,** LWVTX Convention, San Antonio.

**Sun., Apr. 22,** 2 - 4 pm, General Meeting, Trinity United Methodist Church, **4001 Speedway** near 40th Street. Panel Discussion: "Privatization of Government Services and Functions" Open to the public.

**Mon., Apr. 23,** 1-3 pm, Central Unit Meeting, **[NOTE: NEW LOCATION]** Yarborough Library, **2200 Hancock Drive,** near Burnet Road. Consensus, LWVUS study on "Privatization of Government Services and Functions." Members only.

**Tues., Apr. 24,** 7-8:30 pm, North Unit Meeting, **[NOTE: NEW LOCATION]** **4208 Venado Dr.** (between Far West and Greystone), home of Karen Haschke (345-8159.) Consensus, LWVUS study on "Privatization of Government Services and Functions." Members only.

**Wed., Apr. 25,** South Unit Meeting. Please attend either the Monday or Tuesday Unit consensus meeting. Due to the Candidate Forum, a separate South Unit meeting will not be held.

**Wed., Apr. 25,** 6-9:30 pm, Council Chambers, Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second Street, "Non-partisan Candidate Forum: Austin Mayor and City Council Candidates." Open to the public.

**May Events:** Details will be sent as soon as dates and locations are finalized.

-- **Panel discussion** by two leaders on Austin's Charter Revision Committee.

-- **LWVAA Annual Meeting.** See article [below](#).

## General Meeting: Privatization of Government Services & Functions

Sunday, April 22, 2:00 p.m.  
Trinity United Methodist Church  
**4001 Speedway** near 40th Street

~Frances McIntyre

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The League shall not support or oppose any political party or candidates. It may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest.

The *VOTER* is partially funded by the League of Women Voters of Austin Area Education Fund.

Privatization is a movement to deregulate private industry and transfer many government services, assets and functions to the private sector. What do you really know about privatization at the local, state and national level?

Come to the **April 22 General Meeting** where we will have speakers who represent the city, the state, and the Austin Independent School District. They will discuss outsourcing and privatization of their level of government. This is the culmination of the LWVUS study. You have received several informative papers on the subject put out by LWVUS. This information, along with the General Meeting will prepare you for the consensus questions that will be discussed at the **Unit meetings on April 23 and 24**. The purpose of this study is to identify policies and parameters that should be considered when any governmental entity is planning to undertake some type of privatization process.

Federal, state, and local governments own extensive assets and are major employers. Governments often consider selling assets, and outsourcing some functions and services to the private sector, including core government services, such as providing for the safety, security, and general welfare (public well-being) of citizens, the economy, and our country. Privatization of these government assets, services, and functions has been occurring for decades at all levels of government. The consequences of privatizing a government service or function may enhance the function of service. Alternatively, it may reduce or alter functions and services. Government revenues may be reduced or lost, and jobs may be cut. In some instances, this may have a detrimental effect on the "common good" or public well being.

Come to the April 22 meeting to learn more about privatization of government services and functions. This meeting is free and open to the public. Parking is available in the lot across the street from the church.

~**Frances McIntyre**, [mcintyre.frances@gmail.com](mailto:mcintyre.frances@gmail.com)

## City of Austin Candidate Forum

Wednesday, April 25, 6 - 9:30 pm  
Austin City Hall, City Council Chambers

The League of Women Voters of the Austin Area has been asked again to moderate the forum sponsored by the Ethics Review Commission of the City of Austin in cooperation with Channel 6, public access television. This year's forum will include candidates from the following places: **Mayor, Place 2, Place 5, and Place 6**.

The forum will be broadcast live on Channel 6 and replayed multiple times on Channel 6, as well as on demand at [www.austintexas.gov](http://www.austintexas.gov). The forum will consist of a brief opening and closing statement from each participating candidate and questions from the LWVAA moderator. The public is invited, but must be silent throughout and not display any signs.

**Parking:** Austin City Hall has free underground parking for official events. The entrance to the parking garage is on Lavaca Street on the east side of City Hall, just past the loading dock. Pull a ticket at the booth and find parking anywhere on P1, P2, or P3. Be sure to take your ticket with you to get it validated inside for free parking.

~**Jacklyn Williams**, [jacklynwilliams@aol.com](mailto:jacklynwilliams@aol.com)

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## Honors and Memorials

**Update:**

**Carolyn Baker**, active in our League for decades, has recovered from breaking her hip, moved to a new location, and would love League visitors: Pavilion at Great Hills, 11819 Pavilion Blvd., Austin, 78759. This is between HWY 183 and Jolleyville Road.

It is with great sadness that we report the following deaths:

**Betty Jean Pettit**, Mar. 11, 2012, sister of **Frances McIntyre**, past president of LWVAA.

**Miriam Tormollon**, Feb. 8, 2012. A former member of LWVAA, Miriam was a retired teacher who organized Shakespeare Festivals and twice was selected as "Teacher of the Year."

Thanks to members for the following donations:

**Jo Reicher** for get-well wishes for Carolyn Baker

## President's Letter: Learning to volunteer; Volunteering to learn

I have been thinking about the years before I became active in the League, when I was working full time. Then, it seemed as if any contribution I might make toward government reform would be nothing more than trivial since my volunteer time was largely limited to weekends. My pessimism was based on the notion that part-time volunteer efforts could never have a real effect on what I wanted to change.

When I look at volunteer opportunities now, however, I see them as educational. Through a student's eyes, advocacy is not just about applying skills -- it's learning about public policy, group dynamics, communications, and networking. With the mindset of a perpetual student, I can engage in activities without fretting too much over possible outcomes.

To paraphrase an old Eastern proverb, "when the volunteer is ready the opportunity will appear." In this case, I think "ready" conveys a willingness to act with no addiction to a specific or immediate consequence.

The League's informational events are created to educate the public as well as LWV members. All of us approach these events with a desire to learn something new, but I've observed we're less likely to hold that mindset when taking action. I think it's always important to think of ourselves and others as perpetual students. Sure, we apply our knowledge to execute a plan, but no event accomplishes everything we intended, and every event accomplishes something we didn't expect. And by participating, we're usually tested and almost always come out wiser. My message here is a call for more of you to be more involved in your League. We need more active members. If you have a willingness to learn, you already have the most important skill any volunteer could have. Don't let pessimism about possible outcomes deter you.

It may help to remember that our counterparts a century ago were pursuing a seemingly impossible goal in a quest that had already spanned multiple generations. One of the key players of that period was Alice Paul, who started her activism career by joining the National American Woman Suffrage Association. There, she organized the Woman Suffrage Parade of 1913. This event was an effort to attract more women (and maybe a few men) to the cause. It managed instead to attract more opposition than support, much of which was physical and instigated by the police.

Ms. Paul never forgot she was a student. Noting that the ruckus from her parade had attracted the press, she designed many of her next actions to make more people aware of the cause and the Neanderthal nature of the opposition. You probably remember that Ms. Paul was one of the suffragists who ended up being terribly physically abused at the hands of her own government. As an above-average student, she knew that every abuse she took was earning points and supporters from people who could watch in silence no more.

Certainly, I don't think we're all going to have to spend time in confinement and on a hunger strike before we can create change. My point is this: the heroines and heroes of reform never start out that way. And they never act alone -- supporting cast members are always there.

Show up at the Annual Meeting in May with a desire to learn. You may find that to be the mindset that makes best use of your skills.

~Stewart

and Frances McIntyre.

**Judy Clack** for get-well wishes for Carolyn Baker, Frances McIntyre, and Barbara Rudd.

**Judy Clack** for donation in memory of Betty Jean Pettit, sister of Frances McIntyre.

To make a donation in honor of or in memory of a League member, [click here](#) for the form. Then mail with your donation to the LWVAA Office, 1011 W. 31st St., Austin, TX 78705.

## Contact Us

**Stewart Snider**  
President  
345-7047

**Nancy Oelklaus**  
1st VP Program  
431-4946

**Carolyn Baker**  
2nd VP Comm Rels  
249-7012

**Judy Clack**  
3rd VP Organization  
Voter Editor  
731-0280

**Betty Williamson**  
3rd VP Organization  
Advocacy  
474-2130

**Anne Shelby Clark**  
Secretary  
347-0594

**Carol Olewin**  
Treasurer  
380-0088

**Judy Parken**

## Human Trafficking: Panel Summary, Action Steps

~ Blossom Zanger, Barbara Myers, Judy Clack

A panel discussion, "Decoding Human Trafficking" was held on Sunday, March 18, 2012 at Congregation Beth Israel in Austin. Forty League members and guests attended and asked many questions. The program was presented as a forum with a panel of four individuals, who discussed their particular area of expertise on the complex problem of human trafficking in Austin and Central Texas. Austin's Fox News 7 covered the event. [Click here](#) to watch two news stories from Austin's Fox News 7 that were broadcast on March 18. A summary of each talk follows.

### **Laurie Cook Heffron, Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, UT Austin - continues to do extensive research on human trafficking.**

Human trafficking (HT) is modern slavery. HT is the third most profitable endeavor in the world after drugs and arms. A person can be sold over and over, unlike other commodities. Immigrants to U. S. were the first victims, followed by U. S. citizens and foreign-born individuals living in the U. S. In 2000, a federal law was passed regarding HT, which is defined as controlling a person by force, fraud or coercion. HT is mainly evident in the sex trade and in labor. Many HT victims don't realize that they are victims of a crime and that there are services to assist them. HT is hard to detect because victims don't reach out for help. There is a difference between HT and human smuggling. But, sometimes a smuggler is also a human trafficker. Victims are often immigrants who were smuggled into U. S. and have no money to pay the smuggler, who then offers them a "job" to help pay off the debt.

### **Deek Moore, Detective, Austin Police Department, Human Trafficking Unit.**

The Human Trafficking (HT) Unit is fairly new, but its size has increased from two detectives in 2004 to seven detectives in 2012. APD is part of the Central Texas Task Force on HT. Most of HT cases in Austin involve sex trafficking; there are not many labor cases in Austin. Sex trafficking is seldom associated with houses of prostitution; rather, the crime is very mobile, being set up on the Internet or over the phone at many different locations. APD peruses the Internet for prostitution ads. The APD unit sets up sting operations to catch perpetrators. They are mostly looking for minors. A minor cannot consent to prostitution per Texas law. The pimp-prostitute relationship can complicate a victim's willingness to serve as a witness for the prosecution. It is hard for them to break away. In former times, prostitutes were relocated to other parts of the city. The philosophy was, "Take it elsewhere!" Now APD no longer moves the problem but works on prosecution, and is especially committed on cases involving minors. Moore concluded by saying there is a desperate need for a shelter for HT victims.

### **Kathie West, Victim/Witness Coordinator, U.S. Attorney's Office - prepares victims and witnesses to participate in prosecutions.**

Many HT victims are immigrants, both here legally and illegally. Immigrant HT victims may qualify for refugee status in the U. S. Then the refugee victim could qualify for the same services that are available to refugees on a short-term basis: food, clothing, English-as-a-Second-Language classes, and medical care. Immigrant victims of HT may be given "continued presence" status by Immigration authorities. If HT victims cooperate during the investigation, they may be given a U. S. work permit by Immigration. It's hard to prosecute perpetrators of HT. Sometimes frightened victims run away or change their minds about participating in prosecuting their abusers. Only a very small percentage of HT cases are being prosecuted. The public can help by becoming aware of signs of HT and reporting suspicious cases.

### **Membership**

502-0278

### **Lenora DuBose**

**Voters Guide Editor**

292-8201

### **Mescal Evler**

**Publicity**

517-0088

### **Jaci Collins**

**Member Records**

257-9636

### **Jacklyn Williams**

**Voter Service**

452-5968

## **Randall's Donations**

**Randall's Good Neighbor Program** gives the Austin League a percentage of sales from members who link the League to their **Remarkable cards**. Our account number is **465**.

## **Compass Bank Donates to LWAA**

**Have you opened an account at BBVA Compass Bank in the last 12 months?** If so, they will make a **\$50 contribution** to the Austin League of Women Voters. Just email your name (no account numbers) to our treasurer, Carol Olewin, [c.olewin@gmail.com](mailto:c.olewin@gmail.com).

Compass Bank also pays the League a small percentage for Internet and phone transactions. For information, contact Paul Sicotte at Compass Bank, 512-421-5741.

**Judith Averill, Clinical Director, Refugee Services, Greenleaf Counseling - provides counseling for the rehabilitation and social and psychiatric care of the victims.**

Each case of HT is a human tragedy. Victims feel despair, emotional devastation, and fragmentation. Their lives, and the lives of their families in their home country, are threatened. Most choose to stay in the situation to protect themselves and their families from great physical harm. Victims may suffer from extreme anxiety disorder, mood disorder, hyper-vigilance, disturbed sleep, insomnia, and lack of appetite. Averill finds many cases involve some sort of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), much like that found among members of the military who have served in combat. Most victims don't trust counselors or helpers. (They don't trust anybody.) HT victims carry a lot of guilt. They need many counseling sessions to believe they don't deserve to be in this situation, and that it's not their fault. Most clients are amazing survivors. When they learn to trust, they tell stories to the counselor that are unbelievable. They want to lead normal lives-- have a home and family and make a difference. League members and guests expressed an interest in learning about agencies or groups to whom they might contribute, get involved with, or from whom they might get additional information about the problem of human trafficking.

**National Human Trafficking Resource Center:  
1-888-3737-888, or [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)**

**Central TX Coalition against Human Trafficking - [www.ctcaht.org](http://www.ctcaht.org)**

**ALLIES of Central Texas against Slavery - [www.alliesagainstsavery.org](http://www.alliesagainstsavery.org)**

**Slavery Footprint - [www.slaveryfootprint.org](http://www.slaveryfootprint.org)**

**SafePlace Austin - [www.safeplace.org](http://www.safeplace.org)**

## **2012 LWVAA Annual Meeting Workbook**

Everything you might want to know about the Austin League can be found in our *Annual Meeting Workbook*. You can expect to get the latest 2012 edition in mid-April, a month before our Annual Meeting in May. To save on postage, most of you will get the 20-plus-page document by email. Those who do not have email will get their *Workbook* in the mail.

Please print out the *Annual Meeting Workbook*, check out the information about the workings of our League, and bring the *Workbook* when you come to the Annual Meeting. It's a fun evening, featuring a pot-luck dinner, time to socialize, and a unique opportunity for you to have a voice in the way our League operates.

You'll want to save the *Workbook* as a handy reference. You'll find the agenda for the May meeting, the president's overview of the year's activities, as well as reports on past and proposed program activities, membership trends, the 2012-2013 budget, proposed bylaws changes, and a proposed slate of officers and board members. In addition you'll have the LWVAA nonpartisan policy statement, our bylaws, and all our local LWVAA positions.

Each *Workbook* edition is dedicated to a League member who has supported the LWVAA with an extraordinary commitment of time and devotion.

~**Anne Roussos, [roussos@swbell.net](mailto:roussos@swbell.net)**

## **Charitable Giving**

### **IRA Charitable Distributions**

Persons aged 70½ or older can again enjoy tax savings by making charitable gifts directly from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to the LWV Education Fund. Contact Lauren Frank of LWVUS at 202-263-1355 or [lfrank@lww.org](mailto:lfrank@lww.org) for additional information.

### **Gift to League at All Three Levels!**

By making a gift of cash or securities of \$5,000 or more to the League of Women Voters Education Fund Pooled Income Fund, you can receive an immediate income tax deduction for a portion of the gift's value and continue earning a quarterly return on the interest earned for life. You can name your local League, along with the LWVEF, to benefit from the residual funds when you're gone. Contact the LWVUS Development office at 202-263-1355 or [plannedgiving@lww.org](mailto:plannedgiving@lww.org).

## News Briefs

### Luv-Your-League Campaign

The Luv-Your-League Annual Fund Raising Campaign kicked off on March 12th and will run through April 21. Our goal is to raise \$10,000 to support our voter education and local program efforts for the coming year. As of March 20, we had received \$2,140. Be on the lookout for weekly email updates on the amount of contributions received each week.

By now, members and supporters should have received contribution envelopes by mail. Please remember to mail in your contribution before the April 21 deadline. Please indicate on the envelope or check whether you would like to contribute to the Education Fund, a tax-deductible 501(c)3 organization or to the Austin Area Fund, a non-tax-deductible 501(c)4 organization, which helps pay for our general operating expenses.

Show your love for the League by sending in your contribution today. Thank you.

~**Ann Stalnaker**, [astalnaker@austin.rr.com](mailto:astalnaker@austin.rr.com); **Adriana Cox**, [adrianacox@austin.rr.com](mailto:adrianacox@austin.rr.com)

### LWVTX Convention

The LWVTX Annual Biennial Convention will be held this year at the Hilton at the San Antonio Airport from Friday, April 13 - Sunday, April 15. Workshops begin at 1:30 pm on Friday, and a visit to the Japanese Tea Garden is scheduled for Friday evening. Any LWVAA member may attend, and we qualify for 23 voting members at the Convention! LWVAA member Susan Morrison has been nominated for a LWVTX Board position. Our Anita Privett will continue on the Board as the chair of two committees. Come support Susan and Anita, help select statewide studies for next year, and enjoy a stimulating weekend with fellow Leaguers.

#### Convention Agenda

#### Convention Registration

### AISD Community Conversations

A steering committee including League members Nancy Oelklaus and Stewart Snider has been meeting weekly to **design community conversations about public education** in Austin Independent School District (AISD). Here are the words we are now using to describe the effort:

"Getting to the Heart of Democracy: A Process for Responsible Community Engagement in Austin Public Education"

#### **Proposed Outcomes:**

- Increase voter turnout through increased understanding.
- Design a forum for school board candidates focusing on the substance of the community conversations.
- Use results with AISD leadership for authentic public engagement.

We envision that the process will be iterative, with different gatherings on different days. Each conversation lays the groundwork for future conversations. Each small group will be facilitated, and there will be a scribe to make notes and compile the substance of each conversation. Then a document that reflects the substance of the collective conversations will be drafted. The timeline is

between now and the November election. This is a work in progress. Feedback is welcome.

~Nancy Oelklaus, [nancy@headtoheart.com](mailto:nancy@headtoheart.com)

## Two May Editions of the League *Voters Guide*

- Local Elections, May 12; Early Voting, April 30; *Voters Guide*, April 29.
- Primary Elections, May 29; Early voting, May 14; *Voters Guide*, May 13.

Our League will be publishing two editions of the *Voters Guide* in the month of May: one for local elections on May 12 and a second for the primary election on May 29. The *Austin American-Statesman* will insert the LWVAA *Voters Guide* in the Sunday paper, the day before Early Voting starts for each election. Each *Voters Guide* will also be available for download on our [League's website](#) a couple days prior to the start of each Early Voting period.

~Jaci Collins, Lenora Dubose, Frances McIntyre and Donna Pauler

## Office Volunteers Needed

We need several additional League members who'd be willing to volunteer in the League office **one day a month for three hours** from 11 am - 2 pm, Monday through Friday. The office is located at 1011 W. 31st St. near the corner of N. Lamar. Duties include answering the phone, opening the mail, and processing dues and donations. I will provide training and am available by phone to answer any questions that come up during your shift. This is a great way to help the League and your community.

We are very grateful to the League volunteers who have staffed the office this year: **Natalie Balden, Judy Clack, Jocelyn Doherty, Julia Marsden, Andrea Michael, Sheila Milner, Barbara Myers, Nancy Oelklaus, Margit Orange, Judy Parken, Phyllis Portnoy, Janet Reed, Jo Reichler, Anne Roussos, Barbara Ruud, Ann Stalnaker, Barbara Werth, Dianne Wheeler, Doris Wilhite, Jacklyn Williams, and Janice Williams.** Due to life changes among this group, we are now facing several openings that must be filled.

It is very important to the community that the League maintain this public presence by keeping the office open three hours a day. If you are interested in volunteering, call or email me. I found it's a great way to dip your toe in the water, learn a bit about the League, and serve your community.

~ Judy Clack, 512-731-0280, [jbclack@yahoo.com](mailto:jbclack@yahoo.com)

## Reflecting on a Wonderful Initiative

~ Lucia Mueller, Project Intern

The Austin League, with help from a LWVUS grant, participated in "The Youth Voter Registration Project: Empowering Voters of Tomorrow" where we registered 303 high school students in under-served areas. League members volunteered in seven different high schools: Akins High School, Crockett High School, Eastside Memorial High School, Garza Independence High School, Lanier High School, LBJ Liberal Arts Academy, and Travis High School. We addressed 859 high school seniors in 39 classrooms, successfully registering a grand total of 303 students.

**Project Coordinator, Dianne Wheeler,** made all the arrangements at each school and with

each classroom teacher. She also assisted at each of the 39 sessions, unless there were two scheduled at different schools at the same time! Dianne also trained and coordinated the League volunteers. [**Project Intern, Lucia Mueller**, was responsible for our Facebook and Twitter presence as well as the online sign-up system for volunteers. - Ed. note.] League members who volunteered for this project included **Judy Clack, Anne Clark, Brigid Hall, Carol Olewin, Judy Parken, Phyllis Portnoy, Anne Roussos, Sylvia Clapp-White, and Jacklyn Williams.**

Here's a synopsis of a typical classroom visit. To get students thinking about the importance of voting for local government officials, we asked each student to consider the impact on their lives of representatives like school board members, State Board of Education members (several were quite surprised that the curriculum in their classes was not determined by the President!), juvenile judges, and the local sheriff. We emphasized how elected officials determine financial aid, college tuition, electric rates, and where they will be stationed if in the military. Our team gave an overview of what we do here at the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area, including showing our website page and distributing copies of our *Voters Guide*. We emphasized the *Guide's* role in helping a voter make educated choices.

Each student was given a pledge card to sign so they could "pledge to vote" and have information regarding our social media sites, the League website where the *Voters Guide* could be located, and a link to student poll worker information on [Votexas.org](http://Votexas.org). We were able to offer them the opportunity to work at the polls. Travis County Elections has told us that they have received several poll worker applications from students. (It's an AISD excused absence and workers get paid - that was a big hit!) Already, several students have started to follow our Twitter page, even using the site for clarification on anything they might not have been clear during the classroom visits.

Mary Fero of the Travis County Elections office loaned us an E-Slate voting machine programmed with a pretend ballot so that students could practice voting. We told the students exactly what to expect on election day from the time they walk in the door until they receive their "I've Voted" sticker. We also told them how easy early voting is - but we warned them to be sure and read the *Voters Guide* first.

We then went through the entire registration form with the students. They had questions from "What is former name?" to "When I get off probation/adjudication, can I vote?" Of course, our answers to "Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day?" kept changing with the changing dates of the primary! Actually, that was a huge advantage for our project: we were able to get a lot more people registered before the local elections and statewide primaries.

It has been a worthwhile experience. The visits weren't all smooth sailing though: several students were ineligible to register since they were not citizens, were too far from the cut-off for their 18th birthday, or simply forgot to bring their drivers license or social security number on the day of our presentation. Although this set us back a bit, it was incredibly rewarding to find that some students had already been registered and were even up to date on the upcoming elections! We handed out 317 "walk away" forms for students to mail in as soon as they were eligible and had the complete information. We had very few students who chose not to participate.

I hope you will consider joining us for upcoming projects such as this one. The League's mission really shines in these registration initiatives, and it is a great reminder for why we're doing what we're doing.



~Lucia Mueller, [lam3449@utexas.edu](mailto:lam3449@utexas.edu); Dianne Wheeler, [dwheeler@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dwheeler@sbcglobal.net)

## Maxine's Musings - LWVTX History: 1920-1995

~Maxine Barkan

I have chosen to recap some of the programs of the first 75 years of League of Women Voters of Texas history as researched by past presidents Betty Anderson, Evelyn Bonavita, and Diana Clark, published April 1995, edited by Diane Sheridan, and entitled *A Potpourri of Texas League History*. Most of these programs are with us now in one form or another and form a significant part of our legacy.

**In 1920 to 1929**, the League joined five statewide women's groups in a Joint Legislative Committee, known as the powerful "Petticoat Lobby." They worked on American citizenship, protection of women in industry, social hygiene, child welfare, efficiency in government, and uniform laws concerning women. Added later was prison reform. **From 1930-1939**, Texas Leagues focused on property rights for married women, child welfare, legal status of women, voter registration, rural schools and immigration, and international cooperation to prevent war.

**Some of the issues of the 1940s** were on elections, including a campaign for secret ballots, voting machines, education, and appropriations for the welfare department. The League began its study of environmental issues with federal water programs and policies in Texas. A study of Family Courts for Texas was adopted that resulted in a mandate to establish a juvenile court in each Texas county. **Programs in the 1950s** continued with work on the legal status of women, including the rights of married women.

**Emphasis in the 1960s** was on constitutional revision. League research on the three branches of government yielded suggestions for constitutional revision. This issue had a rocky start when a whispering campaign pitted liberals against conservatives, race against race, and rural against urban interests. Has anything changed in over 50 years? The League began studying the selection and tenure of judges, election code reforms, and the study of state and local intergovernmental relations. Sound familiar?

**The 1970s** saw the focus on property tax reform, financing state government, and public school finance. Adopted were positions on water planning, air quality, and land use. Additionally, the combined study of the Texas criminal justice system and juvenile justice began in 1975. **The 1980s** were a busy time, but briefly, women and children's issues dominated studies, such as child support enforcement, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence. Health care for the medically indigent and seriously mentally ill was also part of the mix. The League received a pen from the governor for help in writing consensus on hazardous waste legislation. I wonder where the pen is now! Finally, **in the 1990s** were the studies of the Political Campaign Process and Juvenile Violence System. Both of these resulted in strong positions for advocacy.

I hope this gives you a bird's-eye view of the incredible number of issues the League consistently worked on to promote good government, part of our mission. Perhaps it will motivate some Leaguers to continue writing our history from the 1990s onward.

### Observer Corps: Travis County Commissioners Court

**February 28, 2012**

A report was given on development of Airport Blvd. from I-35 to Lamar. Meetings have been held with neighborhood organizations, business, and stakeholders to develop along "character" districts, emphasizing mobility and easy access by bicycle, walking, metro, as well as vehicle. A study will involve possible sources of funding and having more community meetings.

Voter registration certificates are waiting for maps to be released. For elections on May 12, precinct and district numbers are needed for each address. Programming for local elections has been entered, and they anticipate being able to mail certificates about three weeks after the maps are finalized and any minor changes are approved by the court.

### **March 20, 2012**

A group known as Parking Mobility has made a proposal to the county to facilitate ticketing of handicapped parking violations by volunteers. Additionally, they would allow reporting of inadequate or undersigned spots to help the city correct this. They have asked for an exception to bidding for contract. Parking Mobility is a non profit run by disabled people who are affected directly by those improperly using handicapped spaces.

The proposal is for the city to pay for six months of service on a trial basis. The business model would be for Parking Mobility to receive \$200 from a \$500 fine for every ticket given, with half of that amount (\$100) from each ticket applied to education outreach. The goal is to eliminate abuse of handicapped parking spaces. Parking Mobility hopes to show that ticketing with the use of smart phones will be more efficient for the volunteers, safer, and will increase revenue, thereby covering the costs of their service.

Commissioners were to discuss the aspects of competitive bidding versus giving an exemption in Executive Council and then giving the group direction on how they can proceed. There was concern about the cost of the program but agreement that enforcement was of value to the disabled community.

~**Joann Robison, [jrobison@austin.rr.com](mailto:jrobison@austin.rr.com)**

## **Membership**

It was great to see so many League members and the public at the panel on human trafficking, as well as at the three unit meetings on Texas election law in March.

### **Welcome, New Members!**

We cordially welcome two new members to the Austin League: **Mary C. Cullinane and Andrea Michael**. We are delighted you have joined us. As a member of the Austin League, you are also a member of the national (LWVUS) and state (LWV'TX) Leagues. Call me with your League questions anytime: 512-502-0278.

### **Thank You, Sustaining Members**

Special thanks to this month's renewing sustaining members: **Barbara Allen, Diane and Henry Benjes, Mescal Evler, Carol Whitcraft Fredericks, Karen Hayward, Diane Radin, and Jan Soifer**. We are grateful for your additional financial support for our local League's activities.

### **Thank You, Renewing Members**

Many thanks to the following who also renewed this month: **Mary Blackstock, Cecelia Burke, Nancy Busbey, Julie Byers and Lee Leffingwell, Sonia Colorito, Toye Goodson, Kathleen Hackett, Clark Jobe, Virginia Kerbow-Moore, Ethel Kutac, Karen Lorenzini, Anne McAfee, Edward Silha, Dianne Wheeler, and Carol Wood**. We depend on your support and appreciate your timely renewals.

### **New Membership, Renewal Dues Payment, Address Changes**

Please send your name, address, phone number, email address, household member (if applicable), along with your dues payment and/or any changes to the LWVAA office, 1011 W. 31st, Austin, TX 78705. Checks may be made out to the Austin League of Women Voters. Or you may instead [click here](#) to pay your annual dues online while providing all the above information. Of your regular dues, \$52 goes to the LWVTX and the LWVUS, and only \$8 is left to support our Austin League. **Paying at the sustaining level** greatly benefits the Austin League because the extra money stays in Austin and supports our local League's activities. In either case, the League is grateful for your support!

~Judy Parken, [japarken@aol.com](mailto:japarken@aol.com) , 512-502-0278.