



December 2014

Volume 19 # 5

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LWVAA Calendar

Mon., Dec. 1, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W. 31st St. Members.

Mon., Dec. 1 - Fri., Dec. 12, 7 am - 7 pm, Early Voting in Runoff Elections

Sat., Dec. 13, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm, Holiday Brunch and New Member Recognition, Clubhouse, 6527 Valleyside Road, 78731, Open to members and those considering membership.

Tues., Dec. 16, 7 am - 7 pm, Election Day, Runoff Elections.

Mon., Jan. 5, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Office, 1011 W. 31st St. Members.

Back issues of the LWVAA *Voter* can be found at [this link](#).

Runoff Elections: Details with Links

On the Travis County ballot are runoff elections for seven districts in the City of Austin, for mayor of Austin, for two districts and one at-large position in the AISD Board of Trustees, and for one at-large position for Austin Community College.

[General Ballot for All Travis County Residents](#)



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 after significant study and consensus is reached.

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

If you received this email from a friend, [click here](#)

to get on our list. You do not have to be a member. We will NOT give your email address to anyone else.

Board Contact List

[Carol Olewin](#)
President

[Mary Cullinane](#)
1st VP Program

[Stewart Snider](#)
2nd VP Community Reins
[Judy Clack](#)

3rd VP Organization
and Voter Editor

[Stacey Mather](#)
4th VP Voters Service

[Peggy Stewart](#)
Secretary

[Gwen Santiago](#)
Treasurer

[Judy Parken](#)
Membership

[Jaci Collins](#)



[My Personal Travis County Ballot](#)

Fill out Voter Lookup.
On next screen, scroll down and click on View My Ballot.

[Travis County Early Voting Locations](#)

Dec. 1 - Dec. 12, 7 am - 7 pm, except for Mobile Voting locations.
Vote at any location.

[Travis County Special Runoff Election Voting Locations](#)

Dec. 16, 7 am - 7 pm. Vote at any location.

[Videos of LWVAA Runoff Candidate Forums](#)

Click on the word "video" under the forum you want to watch.

~ **Judy Clack**, Voter Editor, jbclack@yahoo.com

Member Records
[Frances McIntyre](#)
Advocacy and
Voters Guide Editor
[Cinde Weatherby](#)
Development
[Mescal Evler](#)
Publicity
[Eliza May](#)
Special Events
[Hal Jennings](#)
Webmaster

**Advocacy and
the Austin League**



**Holiday Brunch and
New Member Recognition**



All League members (and prospective members) are invited to a Holiday Brunch to recognize the new members for 2014. This is a great chance to meet other League members and see what interests our newest ones. Come join the fun. An RSVP is helpful but certainly not required to japarken@aol.com.

We plan to have breakfast tacos, coffee, punch, and various sweets. If you would like to bring cookies, banana bread, fruit, or other goodies, it would be appreciated, but again, not required.

Saturday, December 13
10:30 am - 12:30 pm
Clubhouse of the North Hills Club Townhome Association
[6527 Valleyside RD, 78731](#)
Between North Hills and Hart Lane, just west of MOPAC

We warmly welcome the **thirty-nine** individuals who have joined our League in 2014: Suzanne Aubin, Nadine Barth, Davida Bilgrad, Julia Bradley, Gigi Edwards Bryant, Katherine Canby, M. Dorsey Cartwright, Leslie Castelan, Catie Cryar, Jan de Vault, Mary Hannah Duhon, Barbara and Chris Frandsen, Jane German, Kara Lee Hall, Bill Hamilton, Brenda Hanson, Harriet Harrow, Charlotte Herzele, Tedrah Hutchins-Robertson, Shaun Ireland, Rachell Jackson, Kasie Joseph, Sylvia Kauffman, Dawn Lewis, Tim Mahoney, Sydney Mantrom, Ann McGeehan, Aileen McMurrer, Jillian Mitchell, Nichole Newlan, Elizabeth and Ryan Nielsen, Genie Nyer, Leslie Pool, Brigid Shea, Jeannie Stanley, Jane Von Alexander, and Cinde Weatherby.

~ **Judy Parken**, Membership Chair, japarken@aol.com

As Advocacy Chair for the Austin League, I want to tell you about some of the activities I have in mind in order to be as proactive as possible with the City Council, the Commissioners Court, AISD Board and ACC Board. I can't do this alone and do it justice, so I will need your help. In January, I will ask for volunteers to form a committee to work on advocacy items. I'll go into more details then. One of the things I want to do for sure is set up separate interviews with all the new Council members and the Mayor to let them know some of the League's priorities and ask them what they consider priorities in 2015. We did this some years ago and it was quite a good program.

**Hospitalized Patient
Able to Vote with League Assistance**

The Story:

Imagine you're 90ish and have voted in every election. And now imagine that on the appointed day of voting, you find yourself unexpectedly in a hospital bed, unable to join the line of people at your local precinct. What do you do? Give up? No sirree. You

We will hold an Elected Officials reception in February (probably) to be held in the Atrium of City Hall. This time there will be a lot more Council members and we will invite the Commissioners Court members also. So, look for more information on that later. It gives the Leaguers and the public a chance to talk one-

tell your nurse the problem. She calls the Austin League of Women Voters to find out what can be done, which makes perfect sense because you used the *LWV Voters Guide* to help you decide whom to vote for.

Because of a tenacious and dedicated nurse, the helpful volunteers at the LWV Austin office, and the knowledgeable staff at the Travis County Elections Office, your ballot was safely delivered and your vote was counted.

The Details:

On Election Day, **Dianne Wheeler**, Office Corps volunteer, took a call from a nurse at Seton Hospital about a patient who wanted to vote that day. Dianne was successful in tracking down the rules with Travis County, and finding out that there is an Emergency Voting process that does allow a patient to vote.

Cinde Weatherby, the next Office Corps volunteer on duty on Election Day, received a callback from the nurse. She said all Dianne's research was greatly appreciated, and that they now had everything they needed except a runner to pick up the ballot from the Travis County Elections Office, take it to the hospital and take it back to Travis County. Cinde couldn't abandon her Election Day post in the office, so she put out a call to a group of League members.

Hal Jennings, League Webmaster, volunteered to do the task. Hal picked up the ballot from the Travis County Elections Office, drove it to Seton Hospital, waited while the patient voted and sealed the ballot, and then drove it back to Travis County Elections Office.

Kudos to Dianne, Cinde, and Hal whose research and tenacity enabled a hospitalized patient to vote on November 4.

City Runoff Forums (available on ATXN)

The City of Austin Runoff Candidate Forums were held in City Hall Chambers, Friday night, Nov. 21. There were seven contested District forums plus the Mayoral forum. That was the night of the downpour when Austin got multiple inches of rain. The rain and lightening plus the usual traffic congestion made for gridlock downtown, so the first set of forums had to be delayed by 30 minutes. The candidates and some of our League volunteers were in a panic about missing the forums. With just a few adjustments, we caught up by the time the Mayoral forum was to start.

If you missed these forums in person or on live broadcast via the City's ATXN-TV (formerly Channel 6), you can see any or all of them [at this link](#). Click on the word "video" under each forum you want to watch. **Early Voting** extends from December 1 - 12, 7 am - 7pm. **Election Day** is December 16. Travis County residents may vote at any polling location.



The group of Leaguers who came up with the questions was fantastic. In fact, a couple of articles in the *Statesman* got much of their information from our forums. Those in attendance in the City Hall Chamber were extremely complimentary. The League sets the standards for a civil, well-organized format, issue-centered questions, and good attendance by the candidates.

It is a real advantage working with the **City of Austin** staff and the **City Ethics Review Commission** because the city (led by **Lara Foss**) provides good quality sound systems, chairs and tables for the candidates and the League's volunteers, and

on-one with their representatives and others.

~ **Frances McIntyre**,
Advocacy Chair,
mcintyre.frances@gmail.com

From the Webmaster



November was a phenomenal month for the Austin LWV web site. On Election Day, November 4, we had over **3,500 unique visitors!** Primarily, they were looking for the *Voters Guide* which, over the entire election period, had more than **21,000 downloads** from our site plus **17,000 downloads** from the *Austin American-Statesman* site. I'm sure this is some kind of record for us!

We posted five news items and built one new web page, which announced the runoff election candidate forums and later provided the [links to the forum videos](#) that are now available.

We experimented with paid promotion of our Facebook page during the run-up to the election. We specifically highlighted the availability of the Voting App from ThinkVoting.

We encourage you to "like" or "share" our Facebook posts to help expand the reach of these announcements to include all of your friends. See the article below on how to get onto Facebook if you are not on it already. Thanks!

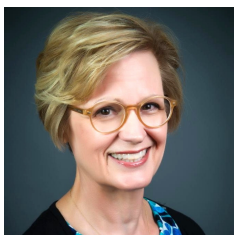
~ **Hal Jennings**, Webmaster,
hal@jenningsweb.us

signage identifying each candidate while the Ethics Review Commission handles candidate invitations highlighting the League's required format. We have been partnering with them for years for city candidate elections and hope to continue to do so.

We were all happy that this was the last of **twenty (20!!)** candidate forums for the elections this year, but I do believe that it was a great experience and those who volunteered got as much out of it as did the public. It is a labor of love - love of democracy in action and love of the League's efforts toward an educated electorate.

~ **Frances McIntyre**, Forum Chair, mcintyre.frances@gmail.com

League's Voters Service Supports the Community



The League of Women Voters of the Austin Area will initiate its annual end-of-year development campaign in mid-December. We've been extremely active in 2014, providing a range of programs and services for the community, especially related to the landmark November election - that isn't over until the Run-off Election December 16.

The numbers speak for themselves:

- **20 Candidate forums** moderated for the Austin City Council, Austin Independent School District, and Austin Community College in the months leading to the November 4 election, featuring **98 candidates**
- **16 Mayoral and City Council run-off candidates** at the additional run-off forum we moderated November 21st
- **56 Pages** in the November 2014 *Voters Guide*, in both English and Spanish
- **120,000 Voters Guides** distributed in the *Austin American-Statesman*
- **8,000 Voters Guides** donated by the League in English and Spanish
- **38,500+ Voters Guide downloads** from LWVAA, *Austin American Statesman*, *Ahora Si!* websites, with more than 3,500 *Guide* views on the LWVAA website just on Election Day.

For the first time, LWVAA's *Voters Guide* information was also available especially for mobile devices through the *ThinkVoting*™ mobile app. During the summer, the League also assisted with seven candidate-education panels coordinated by Leadership Austin.

In Travis County the number of voters was up slightly (2 percent), in a year when it was down significantly across the country and in Texas. *Our state was 50th in the number of voters going to the polls in November!!!* We have such a big challenge and so very much work to do!

You can make a difference. Members and friends will be receiving more information on the campaign to elicit support of our work and mission with a year-end contribution to the League. There will be the opportunity to donate in the name of friends or family, and notify them with a special gift card. If you'd like to [donate now](#), go to the [Donate link](#) at the top of our homepage, lwvaustin.org.

The League remains ever thankful for all of its volunteers and donors who are so steadfast in the commitment to *Make Democracy Work!*

~ **Cinde Weatherby**, Development Chair, cindeweatherby@gmail.com

Mongolian Elections Official

Accolades: LWVAA, ThinkVoting and PBS

Dear Carol Olewin, President:

Congratulations to the LWV-Austin Area for taking the lead in innovation of the LWV *Voters Guide* distribution! Phone applications are the wave of the future and the future is now! We applaud your collaboration with the ThinkVoting app and its use of your *Voters Guide*.

Regarding the national story about this app broadcast on [PBS Weekend NewsHour*](#), LWV-TX would like to link to or post on the LWV-TX webpage and FB page.

We are very proud of the exciting things you are doing at the LWVAA and want to share this information across the LWV network and beyond. Again, kudos to the Austin League!

~ **Aileen McMurrer****, Executive Administrator, LWV-TX, ajmcmurrer@lwvtexas.org

*starring our own Frances McIntyre
** Aileen is a member of LWVAA

Honors and Memorials

Judy Parken made a donation in memory of **Jay Evler**, husband of **Mescal Evler**.

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

"Like" Our League on Facebook



It's so easy to follow our League on Facebook. Thanks to **Brigid Hall** for these instructions:

1. Go to facebook.com and login to your existing account or create a new one.

Meets with League Leaders



Altanjargal Batnyam, Secretary of the General Election Commission for Mongolia, met with **Carol Olewin**, Austin LWV President and **Aileen Mc Murrer**, Executive Administrator of the LWV Texas. The meeting was requested by and arranged by the US Department of State - International Programs. Ms. Batnyam was in Washington, DC for the November 4 elections and then traveled to Austin, TX to meet with the Travis County Elections Clerk, LWV leaders and the Texas Secretary of State.

The U.S. Department of State outlined the following goals for this project:

- To meet officials responsible for U.S. elections (FEC, state-level voting administrators, etc.);
- To examine American election laws and their implementation; and the structure of the electoral system at various levels;
- To discuss the election process and the various types of balloting used (electronic, postal, etc.);
- To observe Election Day organization, administration of polling sites, security and fraud prevention, and reporting from polling stations; and
- To explore voter involvement and advocacy.

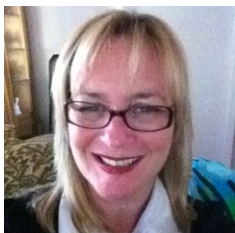
The Mongolian National Government runs the elections for the entire country. Other than major cities, Mongolia is very rural and it is challenging to reach remote areas and provide people with ballots. Paper ballots are used and the completed ballot is fed into a scanner and sent to the National Elections office. Every qualified voter is issued a National Voter Registration card that has the individual's fingerprint on it.

Mongolia currently has six different laws on its books that regulate elections. To simplify this process, Mongolia is drafting legislation that would unify these various elections under a single law. As part of the research process for the new legislation, the General Elections Commission is studying the election systems and processes of other countries.

It was an honor and privilege to meet with a high-level executive of the Mongolian government to exchange information about our election process.

~ **Carol Olewin**, President, c.olewin@gmail.com

Education Funding Made Clearer



Fifty individuals, including four school board members, representatives from education-focused groups, and others interested in education attended a panel about the "Funding of Public Education in Texas" on Sunday, Nov. 16. Leading the conversation were **Edna Ramon Butts**, with the Austin Independent School District; **Daniel Casey** of Moak, Casey and Associates; **Donna Howard**, District 48 Representative of the Texas House of Representatives; and **Kimberly Reeves**,

moderator.

Attendees asked a lot of questions, talked about what a great panel we had, and expressed great satisfaction at having learned a lot from the panelists. One gushed that she finally had a clearer grasp of how education is funded in Texas. If you would like a copy of related documents, including **Dan Casey's** Powerpoint on "Public Education in Texas: Background and Issues," and supporting information from our own **Gwen Santiago**, send me an email.

2. Enter "League of Women Voters of the Austin Area" in the search box at the top of the page.

3. Facebook will show you possible matches to your search terms as you type. Simply click on the box with our logo and title.

4. Once you get to our page, there will be a button that says "Like" and has an image of a "thumbs up."

5. Click on that button.

Now you are subscribed to our page and will see our news stories on your Facebook homepage.

Follow Our League on Twitter



It's so easy to follow our League on Twitter. Thanks to **Brigid Hall** for these instructions:

1. Go to twitter.com and login to your existing account or create a new one.

2. Search for **lwvatx** in the search box at the top of the page.

3. On the left hand side of the page, under "People" click on our logo.

4. Click on the "follow" button and then you will be subscribed to the LWVAA page and get updates on any of our posts.

Shop at Randalls and Support the League

Randalls 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**.

[Click on this link](#) for a document to complete and return to any Randalls store to join the Good

At the LWVUS Convention in Dallas in June 2014, national committees were formed to track legislation regarding **privatization** of our public schools. If you are interested in **school choice** and **accountability**, you can subscribe to an LWVUS Education Issues blog. Subscribe at lwveducation.com. If you'd like to join our local Education Study Group, contact me.

~ **Laura Sheridan**, Chair, Education Committee, lsheridan@sbcglobal.net

Membership Report: Interest Survey and Brunch

Member Interest Survey: If you are either a new member or a member who may have a **bit of time to volunteer** for the League (either regularly or occasionally), please complete this [Member Interest Survey](#). This will help us identify your skills and interests. A few new members have filled this out already, but most of our members have not. We especially need to hear from all members who have a little time to help us. Thank you for [doing this now](#).

Membership Brunch and Party: Plan to come to our New Member Recognition and Holiday Party on **Sat., Dec. 13, 10:30 am**. We'll honor our new members, introduce them to the League, enjoy brunch, and socialize with everyone present. [See the article above](#).



New Members: Five more individuals have joined our ranks as new League members: **Dauida Bilgrad, Bill Hamilton, Rachell Jackson, Jillian Mitchell, and Nichole Newlan**. A warm welcome to each of you. As a member of the Austin League, each of you is also a member of the national (LWVUS) and state (LWVTX) Leagues. See these links for an abundance of educational information.

www.lwvaustin.org www.lwvtexas.org www.lwv.org

Regular and Sustaining Memberships: Of your \$60 in regular dues, \$53 goes to the LWVTX and the LWVUS, and only \$7 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.

Thank You, Sustaining Members: Special thanks to this month's sustaining members: **Bob Gregory, Bill Hamilton, Rachell Jackson, Carol Olewin, and Doris Wilhite**. We are grateful for your additional financial support for our local League.

Thank You, Renewing Members: Many thanks to the following members who also renewed this month: **Kathy Akers, Heather Becker, Chantal Eldridge, Christie and Ande Garbe, Emma Hampton, Francis McIntyre, Hugh Moore, Nancy Namis, Betsy Singleton, and Janet Whitehead**. We depend on your support and appreciate your renewals.

New Membership, Renewal Dues Payment, Address Changes: Please mail 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 LWV of the Austin Area. Choose an amount below. Or you may instead [click here for renewals](#) (or [click here for new memberships](#)) to pay your annual dues online by credit card via PayPal while providing all the above information.

Here is the schedule of dues amounts:

Neighbor Program and help our League.



Compass Bank Accounts Support LWVAA

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, **Gwen Santiago**, gsantiago@austin.rr.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.

Leave a Legacy to Your League

Making a legacy donation to the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area Education Fund in your will is among the easiest ways to offer support of the LWVAEF's work for years to come.

We suggest the following language to include the Austin League Education Fund as a beneficiary of a will or trust:

"I give, devise, and bequeath to the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area Education Fund, a charitable organization formed in the State of Texas, with offices at 1011 W. 31st St, Austin, Texas 78705, {the sum of \$___}{___ percentage of my residuary estate}." If you already have a will, you can have your attorney add a codicil to include the LWVAEF.

	Individual	Household	Student
Sustaining Dues	\$ 100.00	\$ 150.00	
Regular Dues	\$ 60.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 20.00

Contact me anytime with your League questions.

~**Judy Parken**, Membership Chair, japarken@aol.com, 512-502-0278.

After you've added the League, please email the Austin League office, lwvaustin@lwvaustin.org, so we can list you as a member of our League's Legacy Society.