





LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
AUSTIN AREA

www.lwvaustin.org
 lwvAustinArea
 @lwvATX

Voter Newsletter

512-451-6710
lwvaustin@lwvaustin.org

February, 2016

Volume 20 #7

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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 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

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

LWVAA Calendar

Mon., Feb. 1, 6:30 pm, **Board Meeting,** League Conference Room, 1011 W 31st., Austin. Members.

Tues., Feb. 16 - Fri., Feb. 26 Early Voting.

Sat., Feb. 20, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, **Local Issues Group Meeting** League Office, 1011 W 31st., Austin.

Sat., Feb. 27 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, Social Media Workshop II, League Conference Room, 1011 W 31st., Austin.

Sun., Feb. 28, 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm General Meeting: *Ladders of Opportunity.* Trinity United Methodist Church, 4001 Speedway, Austin.

Tues., March 1, Joint Primary Election Day.

Mon., March 7, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting, League Conference Room, 1011 W 31st., Austin. Members.

Wed., March 9, 5:30 pm *State of the County* Dinner and Auction, DoubleTree Hotel, 6505 N IH 35, Austin.

Board Contact List

[Carol Olewin](#)

President

[Lea Masiello](#)

1st VP Program

[Cinde Weatherby](#)

2nd VP Community Relations

[Jaci Collins](#)

3rd VP Organization

[Jacklyn Williams](#)

4th VP Voters Service

[Diane Davis](#)

Secretary

[Gwen Santiago](#)

Treasurer

[Judy Parken](#)

Membership

[Lea Masiello](#)

Publicity/Publications

[Frances McIntyre](#)

Fri., March 11 - Sun., March 13, LWV Texas Convention, Houston.

Sat., March 19, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, Local Issues Group Meeting League Office, 1011 W 31st., Austin.

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

From the President



Austin League helps member flooded during the Halloween Floods of 2015. One of our League family members was severely impacted by the October 2015 flooding along Onion Creek and lost their home. The Austin League collected \$450 from fellow members to help the family with basic necessities.

Flooding in Austin has reached historical levels. The City of Austin and Travis County are facing new challenges as our city and county continue to grow. The aging storm water infrastructure, development policies, and creek and channel maintenance programs and policies need to be addressed for the changing needs. In January 2016, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) published new floodplain maps for the Austin Area. It is in everyone's best interest to know if you live in a floodplain or must travel through a floodplain when leaving or returning to your home.

The Austin League advocates for the protection of our water supplies and the proper maintenance and enforcement of our structural controls, and properly maintained and enforced non-structural controls like impervious cover and vegetation.

Get Out and Vote! Early voting in the Democratic and Republican Primaries runs from Tuesday, February 16 through Friday, February 26. The Joint Primary Election is Tuesday, March 1, 2016.

Vote!

In Texas, you do not have to register with one of the political parties to vote in the primary, but once you have voted in the primary, you can't shift parties if there is a run-off election. In a primary election, you choose which party's primary you want to vote in, but you cannot vote in both party's primary. This does not register you as a member of any party, but you can be identified as voting in that party's primary election.

In the March Joint Primary, you will be voting on candidates for US Representatives, Texas Representatives, County Commissioners, County Clerks, District Clerks, Criminal District Court Judges, Civil District Court Judges, County Treasurers, County Attorneys, District Attorneys, Sheriffs, County Courts-At-Law Judges, County Tax Assessors, County Constables, and Justice of the Peace.

For more information on the candidates, see the League of Women *Voters Guide* at <http://lwvaustin.org> or enter your address at <http://www.vote411.org> and see a list of the candidates running in your district. Don't sit out this election. We need you to vote, regardless of any party affiliation.

Austin LWV receives award from LWV US for its work in testing the new member database and getting its information updated on time. Thank you to **Jane McFarland** for taking on the task as Roster Manager and all her hard work on the new database. We received one free registration to the LWV-US Convention, to be held in June 2016 in Washington DC.

New VP of Programs: Sadly we accepted **Mary Cullinane's** resignation from the Board, but happily we welcomed **Lea Masiello** to the Board as VP of Programs. Lea

**Advocacy and
Voters Guide Editor**
[June Conway](#)
Voter Registration
[Hal Jennings](#)
Webmaster
[Donna Pauler](#)
Voter Editor

Next VDR Round Up



**Needed VDRs for
Voter Registration!**

Alamo Draft House
1120 S Lamar Blvd., Austin,
[\[map\]](#)
February 13th and 14th

Cowboy up Deputies!
More info' coming.

~ **June Conway,**
Voter Registration Director
june_cnwy@yahoo.com
phone: 512-834-9129

Young Voter Project



The **LWV Young Voter Project** has partnered with the Travis County Voter Registrar and the Travis County Clerk's offices to educate High School Juniors and Seniors in Travis County about voter registration, voting rights and information. We will also offer Mock Elections to the schools who wish to have one. The

joined the Board of Directors last year as Publicity Director and helped coordinate the social media classes. She served as chairperson of the *Pay Day and Title Loan Study*. Lea is a retired professor of English from Indiana University of PA, where she taught writing and literature, along with public speaking and a course on our National Parks. In addition she has held a number of administrative positions. Before moving to Austin in 2014, Lea was active in the Indiana County (of Pennsylvania) League where she served on the board of this much smaller League, and did something of everything, such as registering voters; speaking to high schoolers, organizing forums, meet the candidates nights, and annual meetings, (including ordering food)! Look for more carrot cake at League events!

Delegates needed for the LWV Texas Convention. The 2016 Convention will be Friday-Sunday, March 11-13, 2016, in Houston at the Westin Houston, Memorial City, located at 945 Gessner Road, Houston, Texas 77024. If you'd like to be a delegate, contact **Carol Olewin** at c.olewin@gmail.com. You must be current on your membership and have an interest in the LWV to qualify as a delegate.

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

Vote Smart in Primary March 1

For information about your county/district candidates go to www.Vote411.org

- Enter your address and proceed to creating a ballot for your area.
- Make your choices and print if you'd like.

Read the **Voter's Guide**:

Online (available February 14 at <http://lwvaustin.org/voter-guide>) or www.Statesman.com (available in English and Spanish.)

In Print the Sunday February 14 *Austin America-Statesman*.

Copies will be distributed to libraries and other locations later.

You may take the *Voters Guide* and/or your sample, personal ballot to the polls

Vote Early: February 16th - 26th

By mail: Application must be received by February 19th

At the Polls: In Travis and Williamson Counties you can vote early or on election day at ANY polling place.



PIECE OF CAKE!

~June Conway
Voter Registration Director

Vote!

Local Issues/Voters Guide



The **Local Issues group** will meet at the same time (3rd Saturday) on February 20th, from 10:00 to noon. We had a very information discussion from **Austin Energy** at the January meeting. In February we will address many of the current happenings of City Council and Travis County Commissioners. Subjects may include short term rentals Uber/Lyft, land use changes (Code Next), Neighborhood plans, Central TX Regional Mobility Authority. Join the conversation. Bring your opinions

and your questions.

program, "FIRST VOTE" will be delivered to all interested schools in Travis County. This includes public, private and charter schools.

Volunteers will deliver voter education through assemblies, classroom visits or other venues for the students. Because of Texas Law, many schools already have Volunteer Deputy Registrars and do voter registration. Therefore, we will offer a limited amount of voter registration when needed.

"FIRST VOTE" will be piloted on February 11, at Travis High School for the Senior Class. Most schools will receive a 30 to 45 minute curriculum which includes such topics as who can vote, voter registration requirements, types of elections, what you need to vote, when and where to vote, how to choose a candidate and how to understand the ballot language. The Kickoff Date for the program is March 8. We anticipate offering sessions through May and do Mock Elections this fall.

We have also partnered with the University of Texas for a March 5 event called "Explore UT". We have been asked to conduct actual voter registration for eligible people from Travis County along with mock voter registration for others in attendance. This registration will allow the participants to vote in the mock election hosted by the Annette Strauss Institute at this event. This is the first time we have been invited to participate as the University hosts thousands of students who come here from across the state.

Continued planning and preparation is underway so stay tuned for future updates.

~Jacklyn Williams
VP Voter Services
jacklynwilliams@aol.com

2016 Primary Election Voters Guide will be published in the *Austin American-Statesman* on Sunday, February 14, two days before early voting begins on February 16. You will be able to pull up your own ballot on www.vote411.org before the published version comes out. It will also be on our website, www.lwvaustin.org a few days before it is published in the *Statesman*. I want to thank the many Leaguers who helped with getting candidate information, proofing, and distribution of the guides. A special thank you to the long-time, invaluable *Voters Guide* production Leaguers, **Jaci Collins** and **Donna Pauler**.

~**Frances McIntire**
Advocacy and Voter's Guide Editor

General Meeting: *Ladders of Opportunity*



Invisible In Austin:
Who does the hard work that keeps Austin prosperous?
February 28, 2016 - 1:30-3:30 pm.
Trinity United Methodist Church
4001 Speedway, Austin, TX 78751
([map](#))



The UT sociologist, **Javier Auyero**, and a team of doctoral students explored the lives of those who provide many essential city services yet work at the bottom of the social order: housekeepers, cab drivers, restaurant workers, musicians, roofers and others. Their book, *Invisible in Austin*, tells their subjects' stories and focuses on their struggles with substandard housing, inadequate public services and schools, and environmental risks.

On February 28th, some of these student authors will discuss how Austin came to be a city of economic extremes. The panel discussion will be moderated by **Dan Zehr** from the *Austin American-Statesman* who wrote a series on inequality last year. They will suggest possible "**Ladders of Opportunity**" that could enable these hardworking individuals to become more economically and socially stable.

Bio **Dan Zehr**:

***Dan Zehr** covers the regional economy and finance for the *Austin American-Statesman*, but his reporting and writing experience spans a range of business topics and geographies. Prior to his current position, his second stint at the *Statesman*, Zehr co-authored three books - two focused on digital marketing and social media strategies, and a third on the consumer market opportunities in the Arab League countries. After graduating from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in May 2000, Zehr covered Walmart, Dell and many other public companies, as well as state government, utilities regulation, retail and technology. In addition to the *Statesman*, his work has appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and numerous other newspapers. He lives in Austin, Texas, with his wife, Erin, and their son, Will.*

~**Mary Cullinane**
mculli@sbcglobal.net Or
~**Lea Masiello**, 2nd VP of Programs
leamasiello@gmail.com

Volunteer Deputy Registrar Training



Volunteers needed to become Volunteer Deputy Registrars. VDRs help register eligible citizens to vote by distributing, reviewing, and accepting completed voter registration applications. This training must be repeated every two years. for the of term is January 1, 2015 - December 31, 2016, new training is required. If you haven't been trained since January 1, 2015.

You may become a VDR or renew eligibility by attending a one-hour training session held the first Tuesday of each month at 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Training is at the Travis County Voter Registrar's office located at [5501 Airport Blvd](#), [[map](#)] Austin, TX 78751. Upcoming dates are Tuesdays, February 2 and March 1.

Bruce Elfant, our Travis County Voter Registrar, is offering extra VDR training the second Saturday of each month from 10:00 - 11:30 am. (usually ends at 11:15 am). The next sessions will be February 13 and March 12. First Unitarian Universalist Church, [4700 Grover](#), [[map](#)] Austin. Space is limited. Sign up at this [link](#).

~ **June Conway**,
Voter Registration Director
june_cnwy@yahoo.com

Web Master Report

State of the County Dinner



The Austin League's Annual Fundraising Dinner is fast approaching. Mark your calendar for March 9th and be in the lookout for your invitation to arrive in the next week. This year's dinner will focus on the ***State of the County***, a slight change from previous years. The annual dinner has been known as the *State of the City*.

Travis County **Judge Sarah Eckhardt** will keynote and is among the honorees selected for the *Making Democracy Work* Award bestowed during the dinner.

Six women mayors leading municipal governments within Travis County will also be honored with the coveted Making Democracy Work Award. They include **Caroline Murphy**, City of Bee Cave, **Rita Jonse**, City of Manor, **Deane Armstrong**, City of Jonestown, **Rose Cardona**, City of Sunset Valley, **Cristin Cecala**, Village of Point Venture, and **Linda Anthony**, City of West Lake Hills.

The silent auction will begin at 5:30 pm with a reception and Celtic music, followed by a buffet dinner, a live auction, and engaging and compelling conversation.

We are soliciting auction items and sponsorships. Please contact Eliza May, SOC chair for information at elizamay@sbcglobal.net or 512-358-0479.

Please join us for what is sure to be another successful and sold out SOC event.

Wednesday, March 9

5:30 pm - Reception, silent auction, cash bar
6:45 pm - Buffet dinner, program, live auction

DoubleTree Hotel, 6505 N IH 35 [\[map\]](#)
\$65 for LWV members
\$75 for non-members

Click [HERE](#) to REGISTER!
lwvaustin.org

~**Eliza May** SOC Planning Committee Chair
elizamay@sbcglobal.net

State Announces Results of Payday and Auto-Title Loan Study



The League of Women Voters of Texas has announced the results of the *Payday and Auto-Title Loan Study* in which the Austin League participated. Many of our League's members joined in this study by serving on the study committee, attending unit meetings, a general membership forum, and consensus meetings. Your participation was an important part of the resulting new position on these loans! Your voice was heard and represented! Again, the League models democracy in action.

Key points from the state League's announcement emphasize supporting policies, legislation, and programs that enable the small dollar loan market in Texas to maintain access to affordable credit while safeguarding consumers.



A second **Social Media Workshop** will be held Saturday, Feb. 27 at 10:00 am in the League office. Last time we primarily talked about and used Facebook. This time we'll focus on Twitter, but we'll have open time when you can also receive help with Facebook. We hope to see you there. Please RSVP to leamasiello@gmail.com.

And speaking of Facebook, on January 23 our League Facebook page logged its 500th follower. This is a huge milestone. Now, over 500 people will see every one of our posts. If they Like or Share our post, all of their friends will see it, too.

We encourage you to "like" or "share" our Facebook posts to help expand the reach of these announcements to all of your friends. See procedure below.

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

"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.
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.

The *Austin League* held meetings with experts as part of their study of this subject to become informed about small, short-term loan businesses in Texas. Important background information on these loans includes these key points that highlight the need for regulation of these "credit access businesses," as well as providing additional financial education for consumers about the realities of these loans:

1. During 2014, 1.7 million Texans took out over 2.7 million new payday and auto title loans from 3,299 storefronts in Texas towns and cities.
2. The estimated initial cost for a Texan of financing a single payment 2-week \$500 payday loan is \$127; the initial cost of a single payment 30-day auto title loan is \$137.
3. As of January 15th, the Texas Municipal League reported that 31 cities have business ordinances and 15 cities have land-use ordinances that regulate payday and auto title lenders.

In this new position statement, the *League of Women Voters* supports these principles:

1. Developing regulations that increase restrictions on short-term loans and require lenders to offer affordable loans.
2. Designing financial education programs to help consumers understand the consequences of small-term loans.
3. Funding from the state and private businesses to study, monitor, and evaluate business practices relative to these loans.

Recommendations from the study committee: One important recommendation for our own action is to ask candidates for offices at the state level to state their position on these loans during election forums. We want to hear what present and future legislators say when asked directly to comment on the ways in which these loans are affecting consumers.

For more information:

Facts & Issues: *Payday & Auto Title Loans in Texas*

www.LWVTexas.org

~Lea Masiello ,2nd VP of Programs

leamasiello@gmail.com

Membership Report and Interest Survey



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](#).

New Members:

New members **Patricia Klentzman** and **Virginia Rohlich** joined our ranks this past month. 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, \$54 goes to the LWVTX and the LWVUS, and only \$6 is left to support our Austin League. Paying at the

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.

Honors and Memorials

Mary & David Overton (Mr. & Mrs. Thomas D. Overton III) made a \$100 donation to the Ed Fund on December 31, 2015. Thank you!

Donations are continuing to be accepted 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.

Shop at Randalls and Support the League

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:

Cecilia Burke
Barbara and Chris Frandsen
Harriet Harrow
Maxwell Stout and Nancy Dittmar
Patricia Klentzman
Jan Soifer
Terrell Blodgett
Cinde Weatherby
Paula Weisner

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:

Mary Ann Baker
Nancy Bessent
Sonia Colorito
Alison Dieter
Kathi Miller
Kendall Pace
Donna Pauler
Leslie Pool
Karen Rankin
Nancy Rowland
Eleanor M. Sellstrom
Susan Shelton

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:

	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.

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**.

[Click on this link](#) for a document to complete and return to any Randall's store to join the Good Neighbor Program and help our League.

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 LWVAAEF'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 LWVAAEF.

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.