



**League of Women Voters®  
Austin Area**

**Voter**

March 2010      Volume 14 #8

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"The League may take action on governmental measures and policies in the public interest. It shall not support or oppose any political party or candidates." The VOTER is partially funded by the League of Women Voters of Austin Education Fund.

**Support Our Phonathon**

**Sunday, March 7th from 1 p.m.- 4 p.m. At the offices of Bickerstaff Heath Delgado Acosta, LLP, 3711 South Mopac Expway, Bldg One, Ste 300. \***

Members, the Phonathon is the major source of funding for the Austin Area League. Volunteers will be phoning members and friends and asking for their support. If you prefer not to be called, please send in your contribution to the League office as soon as possible.

Please consider volunteering for the Phonathon. We welcome your help making phone calls or assisting with paperwork. Call me at 494-4367 for more information. Thank you!  
- Ann Stalnaker, 2010 Phonathon Chair

(\* Directions: get on the Mopac southbound service road from Loop 360. Loop around under MoPac, then look for Building One and a blue "ARM" sign)

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**Calendar for March**

<b>Sun. Mar. 7, 2pm</b>	<b>Phonathon</b>	BHDA Law Offices 3711 S Mopac, St. 300
<b>Mon. Mar. 8, noon</b>	<b>Central Unit</b>	Old Quarry Library, 7051 Village Cnter Dr.
<b>Tue. Mar. 9, 7pm</b>	<b>North Unit</b>	Judy Parken's, 7917 West Rim
<b>Wed. Mar. 10, 7pm</b>	<b>South Unit</b>	So. Austin Sr Activity Ctr, 3911 Manchaca
<b>Sun. Mar. 21, 2pm</b>	<b>General Meeting</b>	Beth Israel Synagogue (38th & Shoal Crk)
<b>Fri. Mar. 26, 11am</b>	<b>Mailout Social</b>	League Office, 1011 W. 31st

**Mark your calendar** for Sunday, April 18 at 2:00pm. Our general meeting will feature a presentation by **Roger Duncan** (former general manager of Austin Energy) on our city-owned electric utility, green energy, and Austin's commitment to reducing CO2 emissions.

## President's Report

**Dear members,**

As I write this, I'm still winding down from our terrific 19<sup>th</sup> annual State of the City dinner. It was another huge success and gave attendees a chance to talk to elected officials, political candidates, guests and League members.

**Mayor Lee Leffingwell**, in his address, talked to us about how well Austin is weathering the current recession and how we are attracting clean energy, digital media, and health-related businesses to our area. He also told us we face many challenges since he expects Austin's population to double in the next 20 years.

Mary Gordon Spence was even funnier than she was last year (particularly with her story about how she encountered Governor Perry while voting this year). Kudos to the State of the City committee: Carolyn Baker, Jocelyn Doherty, Yvonne Khouri, Alison Dieter, Jaci Collins and Judy Parken. All deserve a round of applause for putting together the ticket sales, raffle, auction, table decorations, and PR needed for the event.

I also want to recognize the group that compiled the Primary Voters Guide. The Voters Guide is our most recognized publication, and many people rely on it for unbiased and pertinent voting information. *Tens of thousands* of people view it online now. Thanks go to Jaci Collins, Anne Roussos, Donna Pauler, Jo Reichler, Joann Lovelace, Kay Taebel, Sandra Fox and those who help distribute the Guide across the community for helping me in the publication of this Guide.

Now, we have another committee working on the annual fund raiser, the Phonathon.

Ann Stalnaker, Adriana Cox and a host of League volunteers are working to encourage you to support our mission of serving the public through publications, educational meetings, and advocacy. The Austin League, through many activities, is gaining recognition as a leading force for good government. Thanks to the work of our dedicated volunteers, we have earned an excellent reputation for well researched positions on governmental issues and are respected for our strict nonpartisan posture. Not bad for an all-volunteer organization.

As always, I invite you to participate in your League in any way you wish. Every member has talent this organization needs. If you want to have a conversation about volunteering, call me or any board member to find an activity that works for you. Your time and financial support are what make the Austin League such a viable and influential organization. I'm very proud to be able to represent an organization with such a reputation.

Now we look forward to more fun and good programs in March and April. You will find information on The Texas League of Women Voters' Convention on page 7 in this *Voter*. We can have more than 20 voting delegates and you can help us be a dominating force in choosing which program to study and influencing advocacy. So, put it on your calendar and try to be there for the program and budget debates and at the Saturday night dinner when Maxine Barkan will be honored. We will organize car pools for transportation.

Thanking you in advance for your contribution to the Austin League.

- Frances

### Honors & Memorials

The Austin League provides the opportunity for donations in honor of, or in memory of, League members. This month, Alison Dieter made a donation to LWVAA in memory of Peggy Nolle.

### Randall's Donations

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

## Meetings in March

### General Meeting - What's Up With Our Air?

**Sunday, Mar. 21, 2 p.m.** - Congregation Beth Israel Synagogue (@ 38th & Shoal Creek) The Air Quality/Pollution Control study committee is organizing a panel discussion on the EPA's new standards for ozone (more stringent). If adopted, this will impact the Central Texas area. The panel will also discuss carbon dioxide and its association with climate change. If you breathe, then you definitely want to come and bring your friends. (see p.5 article). Our speakers are: **Deanna Altenhoff**, Executive Director, Clean Air Force of Central Texas; **Mary Priddy**, Program Coordinator, Austin Climate Protection Program; and **Neil Carman**, Clean Air Director, Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter.

### Unit Meetings

**Monday, Mar. 8th, noon. Central Unit** - Old Quarry Library, 7051 Village Center Dr. "Getting Immigration Reform Right." The speaker is **Ray Marshall**, a member of the UT Austin faculty since 1962. He was the US Secretary of Labor during the Carter Administration and has written extensively on immigration. He has taught at UT's LBJ School of public affairs for nearly 30 years.

**Tuesday, Mar. 9th, 7 pm. North Unit** - Judy Parken's, 7917 West Rim Drive. **Travis County Constable Bruce Elfant** speaks on "Veterans and the Criminal Justice System." A surprising number of veterans are in jail in Travis County. Bruce is working to make sure veterans are aware of the services and treatments available to them.

**Wednesday, Mar. 10th, 7 pm. South Unit** - S. Austin Sr Activity Ctr, 3911 Manchaca. **Local ACLU Policy Analyst, Matt Simpson** will talk about one of the Texas ACLU programs called the "School to Prison Pipeline" (S2PP). This is about the criminalization of behaviors in schools that previously were not considered criminal.

**Friday, Mar. 26, 11:00 am. Mailout Social** Meet at the Austin League office at 1011 W. 31st Street. We'll fold and stamp the March Voter. RSVP to Jo Reichler at 479-4003.

### Welcome, New Members

We cordially welcome Wanda Ahlgrimm and Linda Marie Snow to the Austin League. We are delighted you have joined us. Your membership includes the national (LWVUS), state (LWVTX) and local (Austin) Leagues. We study and advocate issues at all three levels. If you have any questions about the League, please give us a call.

### Thank You, Renewing Members

Mary Arnold, Mary Ann Baker, Nancy Bessent, Terrell Blodgett, Cecelia Burke, Judith Clack, Anne Shelby Clark, Carol Whitcraft Fredericks, Deborah Gardner, Margaret Gomez, Eloise Harriss-Teas, Cheryl Hazeltine, Veronica Johnson, Virginia Kebow-Moore, Yvonne Khouri,

Ethel Kutac, Paul Labuda, Anne McAfee, Myra McDaniel, Laura Morrison, Susan Morrison, Katherine and James Ray, Mary Ann Rivera, Catherine Robb, Daniel Robertson, Eddie Rodriguez, Grace Schmitt, Susan Shelton, Karen Sonleitner, Ann Stalnaker, Debby Tucker, Carol Wood . We appreciate your prompt membership renewal.

If you made a tax-deductible contribution to the League, we thank you for your much-needed support, but this is not the same as paying membership dues. When renewing, please specify that your \$60 is for membership. Checks may be made out to Austin League of Women Voters. Call me if you have questions.

- Judy Parken, 502-0278

## \$\$ Automatic Transfer \$\$

The Austin League wants to make it easier for you to make donations and membership payments. Our bank provides automatic bank drafts whereby you can make monthly or quarterly payments to the League. There is no cost to the member, but there is a monthly minimum cost for the League. If you would be interested in setting up an automatic bank transfer from your account to the League account, let one of the Board of Directors know. If we get 10 or more people interested in the automatic bank draft, we can set up the service. In the meantime, the Austin League can accept automatic "bill payments" directly from you. Talk to your banker about setting up automatic "bill pay" for monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual payments.

- Carol Olewin, Treasurer

## Observer Corps: Travis County Commissioners Court

February 9, 2010

Item 13—Commissioners voted to approve a feasibility study for a career and education training program to be paid for with the surplus from the public health budget.

Item 17—County participation in the 2010 census was discussed. It is estimated that the county left approximately \$200,000,000 "on the table" last census due to an undercount, so the County is developing a plan to count everyone this time.

- Karen Rankin

## Does Your "Elevator" Speech Work Only in a Skyscraper?

How many times have you met someone who asks you what the League of Women Voters is all about? What is your response? Can you finish in one minute? Probably not, unless you've given it some thought. We offer these tips to help you do just that:

### "Elevator" Speech Tips

Brevity. It's not just the soul of wit, it's also the core principle of a good membership "ask." Focus on what's most important and cut away the rest. Think about what is important to that person. You want a hook to pique the listener's interest. Or a quick tag line to encapsulate your message.

LWVUS has used the language; "LWV is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement." Pretty good, huh? You can rephrase this message to suit your audience's interest and illustrate the purpose of your work.

For example: "League members understand that Austin is only as safe and healthy as we are willing to make it. Currently, our League is studying the issue of Austin's air quality. We will be making

recommendations to the City about resulting health effects, as well as ways to educate the public about the issue."

Finish your answer with an invitation to be part of the solution. What can *the listener* do to engage, assist, or support your work?

Continuing our example: "Our air quality effort is making use of a wide variety of skills. The League takes pride in how it values every member's skills and interests. It is truly a membership-oriented organization. We would love to have someone like you to help us out. As a nurse, you know quite well the problems resulting from air pollution."

### Larger Audiences

If you are formally speaking to a group, you may need to prepare more carefully. There are a few basic questions to ask yourself about this engagement:

What is the overall goal here?

What does this audience value?

What message will resonate with them?  
(continued on p. 5)

## League's Air Quality Study

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently proposed more stringent ozone standards for the 5-county Central Texas Region which includes Travis, Williamson, Hays, Caldwell, and Bastrop counties. This will require state and local efforts to bring the region into compliance. Noncompliance could result in the imposition of more rigid controls and loss of federal funding for state highway projects.

Ground-level ozone is a federally regulated air pollutant. Increased ozone concentrations are associated with respiratory problems, particularly asthma in children. Other regulated pollutants such as sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO), and particulate matter are associated with cancer and cardiovascular disease. Studies show that these airborne compounds increase medical costs as well as absences from school and work. Areas with increased levels of these pollutants are also associated with increased mortality rates.

The LWV Air Quality Committee was tasked with revisiting the air quality issue, with a focus on ozone, reflecting the conclusions of the League's 1988 air quality study. There is still concern because the Austin area reached the older 120 parts per billion standard in 4 different years.

Austin has made significant reductions in peak ozone emissions even while the region has experienced industrial development and population growth. During this period,

however, the standard for ground-level ozone has become increasingly more stringent. In addition to the health hazards of high ozone levels, a designation of non-attainment can adversely impact economic development. Increased emission controls result in additional costs to businesses and the public, often causing restrictions on business operations and expansion. Program changes due to non-attainment will require the state to assume primary responsibility for developing a state implementation plan (SIP) for the area, thereby reducing local flexibility for planning.

While the 2009 monitoring data indicate the region may now meet the 2008 standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb), a new standard of 70 ppb or less could put the region back into non-attainment. This would have significant long-lasting implications for the region's transportation planning, economic development and quality of life.

Since the League's 1988 study, concern has also increased with regard to the worldwide higher levels of CO<sub>2</sub>, and the connection of this increase to global climate change. Although there is considerable debate on whether to designate carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) as a pollutant, it is certainly a component of our air that is going to be regulated. The City has adopted an ambitious municipal plan for decreasing our carbon footprint. For more information, you are urged to attend the March "Air" meeting (see page 3).

- *Natalie Baldin*

(from p. 4)

The answers to these questions is the outline for your speech. While preparing, always keep in mind that your audience may never have heard about the League.

Effective communication is really quite

simple when you stop to think about it. Now that you're armed with these basics, commit them to memory by *practicing*. Soon, you'll be bringing in some eager new members!

- *Based on a memo from Marcia A. Merrins, LWVUS Director*

### Highlights from Mayor Leffingwell’s State of the City Speech

The mayor told us he has many concerns, but Austin’s most pressing issue right now is the economy. While Austin has lost only a fraction of the jobs other cities have lost, we still need to plan for the future and attract new businesses. In particular, the mayor wants Austin to become a leader in renewable energy, digital media, and medical technology.

The mayor expects Austin to continue to double in population every 20 years, as it has for over a century. Austin is now the 14th largest city in the country - bigger than Boston, Denver, Seattle, Baltimore, and Atlanta. Our population is nearly that of San Francisco, but we have 6 times the area. So we must develop a multi-modal transportation system, the mayor said. We must also plan for Austin’s water and energy future while maintaining our environmental quality (be a part of this planning and attend the March and April General Meetings on these topics - Ed).

Mayor Leffingwell concluded by expressing optimism about Austin’s future and his appreciation for the dedication of Austinites to make their city what it is today.

### Thank You, SOC Donors!

State Rep. Donna Howard, State Rep. Elliott Naishtat, State Sen. Kirk Watson, Robert Desimone (UT Opera Director ), Bob Gregory (Texas Disposal Systems), Alan Pogue (photographer), Carolyn Baker, Terrell Blodgett, Frances McIntyre, Mary Sue Neilson, Anne Roussos, Ben Sargent, Austin Playhouse, Austin Symphony, Esther’s Follies, Wild Basin, Zach Theater, Twin Liquors, Sheer Impressions of Buda

### LWV - TX Convention

Please save the date for the State Convention in San Marcos on April 23-25, 2010. It will be held at the Embassy Suites Convention Center in San Marcos. This is a great opportunity to learn from other local Leagues and to share our knowledge with them. This year, the Austin League will be lobbying to make public campaign financing a statewide priority. Your presence will help us convey our priorities to other Leagues, so please plan to attend. Plus, our own Maxine Barkan is being honored.

We’ll have more information in the April Voter.

### New Energy Plan – Renewable, Reliable, and Affordable?

This month the City of Austin is considering Austin Energy’s (AE) proposed Resource and Climate Protection Plan for 2010 to 2020. This is a complicated subject that asks how the utility can provide reliable, renewable, non-polluting, and affordable electric power. There are no easy answers.

The proposal by AE is an attempt to balance these competing goals. It increases wind-generation from 12% to 26% and reduces coal burning from 32% to 23%. Natural gas and nuclear will remain about the same. New energy efficiency programs will help reduce our need for new power plants.

We have not had a base rate increase since

1994 even though our bills *have* gone up. Fuel costs and expenditures mandated by The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (the operator of the statewide electric grid) are passed to consumers, but these increases do not provide infrastructure revenue.

You will be seeing media coverage of these issues in the coming weeks. Google “Austin Smart Energy” to find more information. And **PLEASE** attend our general meeting in April with Roger Duncan, our own local (and nationally recognized) energy guru who will be explaining these complex issues. **A speaker of this caliber calls for a BIG audience. So tell your friends!** - Joan Hilgers

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF THE AUSTIN AREA**  
1011 West 31st Street  
Austin, TX 78705

Are your dues paid?

**ATTENTION MEMBERS:** Please fill out the form below and send with your dues renewal and/or any changes to the LWV-AA Office, 1011 W. 31st, Austin, TX 78705. **The League is grateful for your support!** If you do not wish to renew, please notify **Jaci Collins, Member Records**, at [jacic@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jacic@sbcglobal.net) or at 257-9636. This will save time and expense in sending follow-up reminders. Thank you .

**For new and renewing members and for address changes:**

**\*\*\* Not for Women Only \*\*\***

Name \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

Name of household member (if applicable)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ (Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Household</b>	<b>Student</b>
<b>Dues</b>	\$ 60.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 20.00
<b>Additional Donation</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>Total</b>	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

I'm an existing member and this is a change to my information.  
You can also PayPal dues to [lwvaustin@lwvaustin.org](mailto:lwvaustin@lwvaustin.org)

(Dues allocation: National \$29.15; State \$22.80; **Local \$8.05**; Total \$60.00)

MAIL TO LWV-AA OFFICE: 1011 W. 31st, Austin, TX 78705