



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® AUSTIN AREA

VOTER Newsletter

www.lwvaustin.org

512.451.6710

March 2014

Volume 18 # 8

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LWVAA Calendar

- Mon., Mar. 3, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting,** League Office, 1011 W. 31st St. Open to members.
- Tues., Mar. 4, 7 am - 7 pm, Joint Primary Election.**
- Sun., Mar. 9, 3:00 - 5:00 pm. Panel on U. S. Agricultural Policies.** Riverbend Church, Plaza View Room, [4214 N. Capitol of Texas Highway, 78746](#). Open to the public.
- Mon., Mar. 10, 10:15 am, Cancelled.**
- Tues., Mar. 11, 7:00 pm, Cancelled.**
- Sat., Mar. 29, 9:30 am - 12 noon, Community Conversation in Education, AISD Districts 6 and 7.** [Travis High School](#), Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts, 1211 E. Oltorf, 78704. Open to the public.
- Mon., Apr. 7, 6:30 pm, Board Meeting,** League Office, 1011 W. 331st St. Open to members.
- Fri., Apr. 25 - Sun., Apr. 27, LWVAA hosts the LWVTX Convention** in Austin at the [DoubleTree Hotel](#), 6505 N. IH 35. Members needed as delegates. Other members needed to volunteer a shift. Contact Judy Clack, jblack@yahoo.com.

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.

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Board Contact List

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[Carol Olewin](#)

Co-President
512-380-0088

[Nancy Oelklaus](#)

1st VP Program
512-431-4946

[Anita Privett](#)

2nd VP Community Relations

Tues., May 20, 6:00 pm, Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner, Trinity United Methodist Church, 4001 Speedway.

Tues., May 27, 7 am - 7 pm, Primary Runoff Election, if required.

June 6 - 10, LWVUS Convention, Dallas, TX.

Sat., June 14, Transition Meeting, Site and time TBA.

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

Two Experts Tackle Topics in the LWVUS Agriculture Study

LWVUS is conducting an update and review of its existing Agriculture positions. As part of that endeavor, our local LWVAA study committee is presenting two experts to speak on a few of the requisite topics.

Kent Stewart and Julie Z. Ansley

Sunday, March 9, 3:00 - 5:00 pm

Riverbend Church

Plaza View Room

[4214 N. Capitol of Texas Highway, 78746](#)

Free and open to the public

Dr. Kent Stewart will discuss "**Genetically Modified Organisms: The Latest Step in a Long History of Animal and Plant Breeding.**"

Dr. Stewart, with a Ph. D. in Chemistry, has taught at Virginia Tech, the University of Texas at Austin, Rockefeller University, and the University of Maryland. He was a research chemist and laboratory chief for the USDA. He was the founding editor of the *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis* sponsored by United Nations University. Dr. Stewart was a member of the ad hoc panel on Criteria for Determining the Regulatory Status of Food and Food Ingredients Produced by New Technologies. This was one of the first, if not the first, committees established to evaluate the safety of what are now called GMO foods.

Julie Z. Ansley will cover two topics: "**Understanding Our Nation's Agricultural Agencies from Partnerships to Funding**" and "**All about the Beef Industry.**"

Ms Ansley has a M.S. in Agriculture and is currently a County Extension Agent in Agriculture and Natural Resources and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Travis County. Before beginning her role as the County Extension Agent, she served as the Animal Science Coordinator for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's 4-H CAPITAL program in Travis County for six years, assisting underserved youth with 4-H livestock projects. Julie grew up on a cattle and goat ranch in the hill country and always enjoys sharing experiences and teaching others about life as an individual in the business of feeding others - agriculture.



Consensus: After many hours of study and thoughtful consideration, the agriculture committee is recommending that our League not participate in consensus. Our decision is based on the sheer magnitude of the study, as well as doubts about the usefulness of the questions and confusion with the supporting materials. Therefore, the consensus meetings originally scheduled for **Mon., Mar. 10** and **Tues., Mar. 11** have been **cancelled**.

512-467-2674

[Judy Clack](#)

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Member Records

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[Mescal Evler](#)

Publicity

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[Eliza May](#)

Special Events

512-358-0479

League Recognition

Ann Stalnaker has retired from the Observer Corps after years and years of service to the League in that position.

Frances McIntyre spoke to the Myra McDaniel Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians on Feb. 15 about Roberts Rules of Order or "How to Run a Meeting and Who is Robert Anyway?"

Jacklyn Williams was interviewed on the "Capital Tonight" program on Time Warner Cable News on Feb. 27. Jacklyn was asked questions about voter turnout, voter access, photo IDs, and when names do not match voter registrar rolls.

~Nancy Oelklaus, VP Program, NancyOelklaus@gmail.com

Women's Empowerment Conference - W E Con Register Voters; Recruit League Members Mar. 22 & 23



The newly formed Women's Community Center of Central Texas is hosting their first annual [Women's Empowerment Conference](#) (WE Con) on March 22-23, 2014, 8:30 am - 6:00pm, at the [Norris Conference Center](#), 2525 W. Anderson Lane, Austin, Texas 78757, on the south side of Northcross Mall.

They have invited the our League to host a table at their Resource Fair during the conference from 1:00 - 6:00 pm on Saturday, March 22 and Sunday, March 23. The League table will have materials to (a) increase awareness of our organization and issues, (b) promote new membership, and (c) conduct voter registration. League members can volunteer their time and talent from 1:00pm to 3:30pm or 3:30pm to 6:00pm on each day. Volunteer Deputy Registrars are needed for each time slot. **League members who are interested in assisting** may contact the committee members below.

The Women's Empowerment Conference will support the women of the Austin area, including teens and tweens, and provide them with resource information, featuring workshops all day on topics such as financial literacy, resume writing, and women's health, among others, with sessions being conducted in Spanish and English. Full workshop, childcare, and registration information can be found at www.weconaustin.org.

~ Nancy Namis, nancynamis@yahoo.com
~ Cinde Weatherby, cindeweatherby@gmail.com

Voting and Voters Service



The **Joint Primary Election** is just a few days away: **Tuesday, March 4, 2014, 7 am - 7 pm.** Travis County voters may vote at any polling location where you see a "Vote Here" sign. Visit the [Travis County Clerk's website](#) to find a polling location near you and to see what's on the ballot. Remember that you will be required to show your Photo ID.

Review the Leagues' five county [Voters Guide](#). Voter information for our five surrounding counties can be [found here](#). The Primary Runoff Election (if required) will be Tuesday, May 27, 2014.

Thank you to the *Austin American-Statesman* for partnering with us again this year to publish the *Voters Guide*, and thank you to all League volunteers who participated in getting the *Voters Guide* out this time: Publication Committee: **Frances McIntyre, Jaci Collins, and Donna Pauler**; the Office Corps phone and bundling crew, and all those who delivered the stacks around the community. It takes a lot of effort to get out a *Voters Guide*, and we really appreciate all who "step up to the plate". Realizing that the November General Election is going to be expanded with the 10-district City Council election, we are challenging ourselves to be ready for an exciting fall election season.

Voter Registration: We need all Volunteer Deputy registrars to continue their duties in preparation for the next election. Deputy registrars may continue to register people for the November 4th General Election through Monday, October 6, 2014, the last day to register to vote. Those interested in becoming a Volunteer Deputy Registrar or in joining the Voters Service committee should contact me.

~ Jacklyn Williams, VP Voters Service, jacklynwilliams@aol.com



Community Conversation in Education



The League's last planned Community Conversation on Public Education will be held from 9:30 to noon on Saturday, March 29, at [Travis High School](#), Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts, 1211 E. Oltorf, 78704.

We will examine the impact of over-enrollment in many of the schools in these districts and explore why these districts rejected (at a higher rate than in the rest of the city) bonds that would have alleviated overcrowding.

We still need volunteers for facilitator and recorder on March 29. Leaguers who are interested should contact me.

Reports from the six prior community conversations can be found on [this page](#).

~Nancy Oelklaus, VP
Program and Chair,
Education Work Group,
NancyOelklaus@gmail.com

Be a Delegate to the LWVTX Convention Scholarships Available



LWVAA needs members to serve as delegates to the LWV of Texas Convention that will be held in Austin, April 25 -27, 2014. Every other even-numbered year, LWV of Texas convenes a state convention to which delegates and members from the 25 Leagues across Texas are invited to attend. Whether you are new to the League or a seasoned warrior, the 2014 State Convention is great place to learn more about the League, participate in valuable workshops, and meet others who promote civic engagement and voting. Delegates will attend workshops and handle LWV-Texas business in the mandatory plenary sessions all day Saturday and Sunday morning. This is a great way to find out more about how future programs of statewide study are determined. In addition, **LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara** will speak at the Saturday lunch.

LWVAA is entitled to send up to twenty delegates to Convention based on the size of our membership. To encourage members to serve as delegates, the LWVAA Board approved reimbursing \$100 of the \$125 registration fee for up to eight prospective future leaders of our League. Please consider representing our League at this important event. Notify me (Carol Olewin, c.olewin@gmail.com, 512-380-0088) as soon as you register. You will be automatically considered for one of these scholarships by the Membership and Nominating Committees of LWVAA.

To register to attend the Convention as a delegate, go to www.lwvtx.org . Or more specifically, [go here](#) for convention information and [here](#) for the registration form.

~ **Carol Olewin**, Co-President and Austin Convention Chair, c.olewin@gmail.com



Austin City Government 101

Austin City Government 101 was a public two-morning forum on how our city government operates. These forums, on February 8 and 22, were organized through the cooperation of the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area, KLRU, KUT 90.5 and the U.T. Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life. The purpose was to inform, educate and encourage citizen participation in Austin by teaching how to make ones voice heard at City Hall.

The new City Council will face unprecedented challenges after being elected this November, and will need the informed participation of every constituent. The co-sponsors' goal was to help usher in an effective new City Council with an informed electorate. The panel discussion on the functions of city government was well received by the audience whose many questions were answered by the presenters. The audience learned how to effectively communicate with city officials from the panelists and they learned what some of the boards and commissions do and how they relate to the Council. Both sessions were well attended and there were great questions from the audience. A special thank you to our KUT moderators, **Joy Diaz** and **Jennifer Stayton**, and to all those whose tireless effort made the event a great historic success.

More LWVTX Convention Notes

Sponsors

Sponsorships in the amounts of \$100, \$250, \$500, and \$1,000 are still available for the State Convention.

Sponsors will be listed in the Delegate Workbook as well at the various venues during the Convention depending on their level of sponsorship.

Proceeds from the sponsorships will pay for the breakfasts, refreshment breaks and auction room refreshments. If you'd like to be a sponsor or recruit a sponsor, contact me.

Dinner Cruise

Austin River Boat Cruise and Dinner for the State Convention will be held Friday evening, April 25. \$65 per person includes transportation from DoubleTree Hotel to boat dock on Lake Lady Bird Johnson, a cruise on the river boat Night Hawk, dinner and camaraderie, and transportation back to the hotel. [Click here](#) for more information and to make a reservation.

~ **Carol Olewin**,
Co-President and Austin
Convention Chair,
c.olewin@gmail.com

Honors and Memorials

Thanks to **Bob Batlan** for his gift in honor of the special birthday of his sister, **Judy Clack**.

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

The two sessions from February 8 are available on the web. To find the videos, click on the lime green bar near the [top of our homepage](#), lwvaustin.org. Or [go to this link](#) to find both videos. The sessions from February 22 will be uploaded as soon as they are available. We expect to have a Spanish translation of the first two videos soon as well as CDs to loan out to community groups.

- ~ **Frances McIntyre**, mcintyre.frances@gmail.com
- ~ **Anita Privett**, anita.privett@gmail.com
- ~ **Jacklyn Williams**, jacklynwilliams@aol.com



State of the City Wrapup

On February 5, the League held its annual State of the City Dinner and Auction to a sold out crowd. As the primary fundraiser for the League's Education Fund, the event was a complete success, numbering more than 120 persons of which 46 were non-members. Three attendees joined the League following the event.

The League honored each member of the Independent Citizen's Redistricting Commission (ICRC) with its "Making Democracy Work Award" for the hundreds of volunteer hours spent in drawing new city council districts. **Professor Steve Bickerstaff** gave the keynote speech that was captured by [Ken Martin](#) of the Austin Bulldog.

Community and League members served as sponsors for the State of the City. We especially thank **Bill Aleshire** of Riggs, Aleshie, and Ray, P.C. who was a "Celebrating Democracy" sponsor of the event. Our thanks also go to these sponsors: Anonymous, Robbie Ausley, Alison Dieter, Lulu Flores, and Bob Gregory of Texas Disposal Systems.

Anita Privett posted a series of photos from the State of the City event [here](#). [Wait for the page to load.]

- ~ **Eliza May**, Chair, Special Events, elizamay@sbcglobal.net

"Transforming Health Care Delivery in Central Texas"



An attentive audience of nearly 50 would agree with Mary Cullinane's description, "These three speakers are Travis County rock stars!"

Trish Young Brown, CEO

W. 31st St., Austin, TX
78705.

"Like" Our League on Facebook

It's so easy to follow our League on Facebook. With thanks to member Brigid Hall for these instructions:

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

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:



of Central Health; **Phil Huang**, Medical Director of the Austin-Travis Health Department; and

David Evans, Executive Director of Austin-Ravis County Integral Health Care updated us on the transformation of healthcare, public health, and mental healthcare in Austin and Travis County on February 23.

The League's health/mental health study committee will be proposing an update of our League's current positions for consideration by our membership at the May Annual Meeting. Look for their statement in the League's *2014 Workbook* to be published in mid-April.

~**Mary Cullinane**, Healthcare Study Chair, mculli@sbcglobal.net

Co-President's Message: New Perspectives Equals New Opportunities



Recently, I had a conversation with new LWVAA member, **Stacey Mather**, who is considering taking a formal role in our organization. It's great to converse with someone who has a perspective that focuses more on what we could do as an organization. Most of us who are active tend to think more in terms of what we are doing. Of course, our current projects require our attention, but I think we should always save some fuel for thinking about new possibilities. So I'm grateful to get the perspective of people who are relatively new to the

organization because they tend to look more at the horizon than the next few steps.

As Stacey and I discussed the organizations needs and her interests, we covered quite a bit of ground and came up with some things I'd like to share with you. (I should mention that she hasn't committed to anything, and with a full time job and other volunteer responsibilities, she's not going to be managing multiple projects at the League.) I'm offering this here mostly to find out what YOU think.

History

(1) Stacey mentioned that she's amazed at the depth of experience of the LWV members she has met. She suggested it might be of value if we organized an effort to **capture our members' experience in writing or in a series of videos**. Many of you know or have met some genuine political icons (Eleanor Roosevelt, Ann Richards, Cissy Farenthold and Barbara Jordan come to mind) and have stories to tell. Many of you know what it was like to be active when opportunities for advocacy were far more limited. Many of you fought for the Equal Rights Amendment. Many of you helped pass landmark legislation, and many of you were active during some of Texas' political scandals (Sharpstown, Bo Pilgrim). I'll wager that many of you also remember when LWVUS in 1987 said "The League of Women Voters is announcing today that we have no intention of becoming an accessory to the hoodwinking of the American public." This was in response to political party demands about the Presidential Candidate forums we had been holding.

(2) Stacey and I agreed that your accounting of these people and events would be riveting to those of us who only know them from newspaper accounts or from history books. I hope you agree that this is worth some effort to capture and archive.

(3) At our office, there are numerous photos, reports and publications about our past. These appear to date back to the mid-1970's. A couple of months ago, I was visiting the Austin History Museum, and saw a collection of League materials that appear to go back to the 1920's and leave off in the mid 1970's. This suggests to me that we haven't regularly offered our **historical archives** to the museum. During my visit there, I learned that the History Museum librarians are interested in having a conversation with us about taking some of this stuff, which I think is a great idea.

" 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 at lwvaustin@lwvaustin.org so we can list you as a member of our Love-Your-League Legacy Society.

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 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, Carol Olewin, 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.

Mentoring

(1) Stacey believes that many younger people would jump at the chance to work with experienced League members in some kind of mentoring program, perhaps combined with advocacy training. I know that many of you have served more than enough time working on the machinery of advocacy. But I'm thinking you might have some passion for working with younger folks who are more than eager to do the legwork just to learn the process. Your experience is a resource that I would love to see utilized in a way that is interesting to you while benefiting voters and younger advocates.

Communication

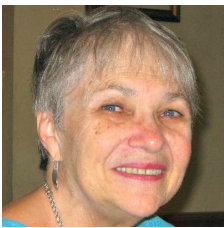
(1) We know there are channels of communication we could be using more effectively. We've already put some effort into this. But I think there is a lot of potential in this arena that we're not fully utilizing. With our new website design, we can capture more interest now. I think this makes it more important to follow up with frequent e-communications that keep us in people's minds.

(2) Also, I think we often forget that our voice is somewhat unique among organizations that advocate for public policy. With all the shrill commentary that now passes for news or informed opinion, too many voters have given up trying to discern the truth and have just tuned out entirely. You and I know there remain a number of intellectually honest avenues for engaging in politics. If we have an effective communication plan, our thoughtful voice could be a service to far more people than it is right now.

I hope to appeal to any LWVAA member who might be interested in being interviewed, being a mentor, or helping us form an even more effective communication strategy. **Please shoot me an email** with your thoughts about this. By being creative, I believe LWVAA can make effective and rewarding use of all our skills.

~ **Stewart Snider**, Co-President, s2snider@gmail.com

Membership



February was a busy month. It was wonderful to see so many members at the State of the City Dinner and Auction as well as at the Healthcare Panel discussion. Also several members attended the Austin Government 101 events at the KLRU studios.

New Members: Five have joined our ranks as new League members: **Charlotte Herzele, Shaun Ireland, Tim Mahoney, Dr. Jeanie Stanley, and Cinde Weatherby.** A warm welcome to each of you. As a member

of the Austin League, each of you are 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: **Randy Chapman and Debra Danburg, Dana De Beauvoir, Bob Gregory, Martha Hudson, Julia Marsden, and Jan Williams.** We are grateful for your additional financial support for our local League's activities.

Thank You, Renewing Members: Many thanks to the following members who also renewed this month: **Nancy Bessent, Sonia Colorito, Christie Garbe, Virginia Kerbow-**

Moore, Yvonne Khouri, Ethel Kutac, Hugh Moore, Karen Rankin, and Joyce Robinson.
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](#) to pay your annual dues online by credit card via PayPal while providing all the above information.

Here is the schedule of dues amounts:

	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.

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