



**League of Women Voters®
Austin Area**

Voter

May 2010 Volume 14 #10

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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.

Calendar for May

Monday, April 26 thru Tuesday, May 4 - **Early Voting.**
Saturday, May 8 - **Joint General and Special Elections**
(ACC, AISD, and area City Council elections)

Monday, May 10, noon. **Central Unit** -
We're back at the Howson Library, at 2500 Exposition Blvd.

Tuesday, May 11, 7 pm. **North Unit** -
Judy Parken's 7917 West Rim Drive.

Wednesday, May 12, 6pm - **Austin League Annual Meeting**
First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4700 Grover.

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LWV Austin Area - Annual Meeting - May 12th

Our Annual Meeting gives *you* an opportunity to participate in deciding how *your* League will operate in the following year. LWV-AA is guided by *you* and always benefits from *your* ideas. *You* are the reason it continues to be a vital organization as it serves the citizens of Austin through education and advocacy.

We hope you'll come and bring a dish to share, or just make a \$5 donation at the door.

You should now have the handbook (either by mail or on your computer). Briefly, we will discuss the budget

and two bylaws amendments. Plus, we'll **review these Program items:**

- Continuing the Air Quality Study
- Continuing the Energy Study
- A new program on transportation
- A new program on libraries
- A new program on the health care district
- A new study on the City Council/ Manager form of government
- A new study on housing
- A new study on sex education

President's Report



Dear members,
Hooray for Spring time. The wildflowers are beautiful this year, aren't they? In addition to enjoying the lovely

Spring weather, I hope you plan to come to the Annual Meeting on May 12th (details elsewhere in this Voter). This League year is coming to a close, which means it's time for us to chart the course for the following year. Come and bring a dish (or \$5), enjoy some conversation with friends, and help us with the business of the League.

The Austin Energy study committee certainly came through in April with a wealth of information about our city-owned utility. At the unit meetings, we received a good basic understanding of the works of a complicated utility company which has provided electricity for over 100 years. We also were privileged to get even more information from Roger Duncan, the just-retired general manager for Austin Energy. Thanks to the committee headed by Joan Hilgers and Nan Clayton as they

continue this important study.

The Unit Meetings in May will give us more information on Austin's air quality - further proof that the League is a great place to learn more about important issues.

The Voters Guide for the May 8th election should now be in your hands. Many thanks again to all those folks that help produce the Guide. It is a labor, and I do mean labor, of love. Most of the candidates for office are grateful for the exposure they get in our Guide and we get many calls asking when the Guide will be out. Many voters depend on the unbiased information to help them decide which candidate they will support.

Shortly after the Annual Meeting, my husband and I will be leaving to visit our daughter in London; then we're on to visit several cities in Eastern Europe. We are looking forward to this adventure and frankly, I don't expect to be thinking of the League during those few weeks...

Cheerio,
- Frances

Randall's Donations

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

Honors & Memorials

The Austin League provides the opportunity for donations in honor of, or in memory of, League members. Any member may participate.

Meetings in May

Unit Meetings

Monday, May 10, noon. Central Unit - 2500 Exposition Drive.

NOTE: We're back at the Howson Library this month.

Tom "Smitty" Smith, Director of Public Citizen of Texas, will speak about state and local energy policies and actions to combat global warming.

Tuesday, May 11, 7 pm. North Unit - Judy Parken's 7917 West Rim Drive. Eva Hernandez of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club will speak about the impacts of industrial sources of air pollution, like coal-fired power plants, a look at the alternatives, and about the upcoming legislative priorities.

South Unit does NOT meet this month. Please attend the North or Central meeting.

General Meeting

Wednesday, May 12, 6pm - Austin League Annual Meeting (see p. 1)

First Unitarian Universalist Church, 4700 Grover. Bring a dish to share, or just make a \$5 donation at the door. We hope you'll be there!!

Membership

Welcome New Members

We cordially welcome Gayle Braecklier, Mescal Evler, Leslie Hayn, Bill Reinehr, Susie Reiter, Sonia Santana and Claire Weinstein to the Austin League. We are delighted you have joined us. Your membership includes the national, state and local Leagues. We study and advocate issues at all three levels.

If you want to talk with a person, Judy Parken, Membership Co-chair, is happy to talk with you and answer questions (502-0278).

Thank You, Renewing Members

Many thanks to recent renewals - Sonia Colorito, Ruth Epstein, JoAnn and Edmund Farrell, Polly Robertus, Mary Ellen Roche and Diane Wheeler. We always appreciate your prompt membership renewal.

If you joined the State or National Leagues, you are automatically a member of the Austin League. Please call if you have questions.

- *Judy Parken, Membership Co-chair*
502-0278

The League's State Convention – Recap

The LWV-TX **State Convention** in San Marcos was held on April 23-25, 2010. Here are some of the decisions from this event:

Budget items announced:

- No increase in the Per Member Payment (PMP)
- Local Leagues may pay up to 50% of their PMP from their Education Funds.

Program Changes:

- A new water study
- A new study about Home Owners Associations

League Supports:

- The elimination of jury sentencing (except in capital cases) and revision of the penal code to reduce the disparity of sentences
- Public financing for judicial campaigns
- Long term care for persons with disabilities

Austin Members at the Convention

We celebrated the League's 90th birthday as we celebrated **Maxine Barkan's** 91st birthday. We found out that among the many remarkable things about her, Maxine (as a local league president) hosted Eleanor Roosevelt when the First Lady visited her hometown in Ohio in the 1940's. Happy birthday, Maxine!



Austin's Program Chair, **Anita Privett**, was elected to the State League's position of Advocacy Vice-president. In this position, Anita will play a key role at the State Capitol in the next Legislative Session next year. Congratulations, Anita!



State Board of Education Forum

Mark your calendar for Sept. 28th, 2010 for the State Board of Education forum, which will be held at the KLRU studios. Please plan to attend - we really want to fill the place. The forum will be taped that night and played on air several times prior to the November election.

We're still looking for donations to help pay for the production costs. You can help support this important effort by writing a check to KLRU and identifying the gift as being for "LWV

Austin SBOE Forum. Send it to the Austin LWV office at 1011 W. 31st Street, Austin TX 78705. By the way, this gift is tax deductible.

If you know others who share our view that the SBOE is profoundly important, please invite them to contribute to and attend the forum.

Thank you in advance.

- Nan Clayton, Janet Hamilton, Lisa Harris, Susan Morrison, Mary Patrick, Anita Privett, Anne Roussos, and Alice

Did You Know?
About Our Members



Suzy Reid has been a member since 1971 and was President in

1975-76. Since then, she has served on many study committees and on the Lobby Corps numerous times. Suzy is a member of the Texas Observer's Steering Committee for the MOLLY National Journalism Prize, which recognizes "Superior Journalism in the Tradition of Molly Ivins."

Joann Lovelace



joined the League in 1966. In 1976, she agreed to "baby sit" the LWV-Texas office, a job that morphed into Executive Director. She spent the next two decades raising funds for the State League from grants, individuals, and corporations. In 2008, she agreed to work with LWV-Austin's fundraising efforts, substantially increasing AA's list of individual donors.

Observer Corps:

Travis County Commissioners Court

April 20, 2010

Item 5 - Healthy Families Travis County gave an update on their services. Among the positive data, it was reported that there were no cases of child abuse from the families completing their program.

Item 10 - Plans for Travis County to work with St. David's and Seton hospitals to share information, coordinate services, and plan for a 3rd Star Flight aircraft. Working groups are being set up to improve cooperation among the three entities.

Item 13 - The Austin Comprehensive Plan committee reported on the current status of their committee. Five of the 37 members of the committee were selected by Commissioners Court as county representatives for this group. Results of initial fact-finding, including results of "Meeting in a Box" sessions (held by the League of Women Voters and other groups) are currently being compiled and analyzed. More opportunities for public input are planned, with results to be used for the city's long-range planning. Travis County will use the results of the city's plan when designing the county long-range plan.

Item 14 - Following a sharply divided discussion, the Commissioners Court voted to add a Division Director and legal secretary to the County Attorney's office, who will specialize in policy formation and litigation. Commissioner Davis voted with Commissioners Eckhardt and Huber. The goal is to have additional expertise when persuading the Legislature for more county authority, as well as having a specialist who will make certain that the current authority is fully formulated and utilized. Judge Biscoe and Commissioner Gomez voted against the measure, primarily for budgetary reasons.

- Karen Rankin

**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 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 _____

	Individual	Household	Student
Dues	\$ 60.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 20.00
Additional Donation	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

I'm an existing member and this is a change to my information.
You can also PayPal dues to 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