



# League of Women Voters® Austin Area

# Voter

September 2010 Volume 15 #2

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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.

## September Calendar

**Fall Kickoff - Sunday, Sept. 12th, 2 pm** (see p.3)  
Congregation Beth Israel, 3901 Shoal Creek.

**Central Unit.**-- Monday, Sept. 13th, noon. (see p.3)  
Howson Library, at 2500 Exposition Blvd.

**North Unit.**-- Tuesday, Sept. 14th, 7 pm. (see p.3)  
Judy Parken's, 7917 West Rim Drive.

**South Unit** -- Wednesday, Sept. 15th, 7pm. (see p.3)  
South Austin Recreation Center  
3911 Manchaca Rd, near Ben White Blvd.

**Capitol Corps Meet and Learn** -- Tuesday, Sept. 21st, 10:30am (see p.4)  
Howson Library, at 2500 Exposition Blvd.

**SBOE Candidates Forum** — Tuesday, Sept. 28th, 6:30 pm (see below)

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## State Board of Education Candidates Forum

The League of Women Voters of the Austin Area Education Fund, in partnership with KLRU-TV, will sponsor a forum for candidates in Districts 5 and 10 of the SBOE. The forum will be taped and broadcast prior to the beginning of early voting for the November election. KLRN in San Antonio is also expected to broadcast the event.

Moderating the forum will be Evan Smith, CEO and Editor-in-chief of *The Texas Tribune*. All candidates in the District 5 and 10 races have been invited. Candidates in District 5, which runs south from Lady Bird Lake in Austin to the San Antonio area, include Rebecca Bell-Metereau (D), Ken Mercer (R), and Mark Loewe (L). Candidates in District 10, which runs north of Lady Bird Lake in Austin to the Houston area, include Judy Jennings (D), Marsha Farney (R), and Jessica Dreesen (L).

**We still need your help to fund this forum!** If you haven't already donated, please consider helping fund this forum. (First: *Special thanks to those who have already donated!!*) All donations will offset forum production costs. Please ask your friends and associates to make a donation (which is tax-deductible). You may send a check to the LWVAA office (1011 West 31st St., Austin, 78705.) made out to KLRU-TV, with a memo, "SBOE Forum, LWVAA Ed Fund." The SBOE Forum Committee will select from questions suggestions gathered from a variety of sources. Please attend and plan to be at the studio (at Guadalupe and 26th St) by 6:30 p.m. The taping will run from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., with a 30-minute Web session to follow. For more information, please call Anne Roussos at 441-3913 or the LWVAA office, 451-6710.

## President's Report

- Frances McIntyre



**Dear members,**

Get ready! Our 2010-2011 League year is about to start and the lazy days of summer are over. The heat is still with us, but there is hope that it will eventually end. The Austin League is jumping in with both feet with our

September programs. We have so many interesting programs planned that you won't want to miss them, so get out your date books. The Kickoff meeting of the year on Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> will feature Fred Zipp, Editor of the Austin American-Statesman. This will be your opportunity to find out how a major newspaper operates and what governs their choices. Come and ask your specific questions of Mr. Zipp or express your opinion on the coverage of the local news. The Unit meetings on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> will address Vote Integrity — are our votes being counted and recorded accurately?

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, in cooperation with KLRU, the Austin League will host a candidates forum for the State Board of Education Districts 5 and 10. Details are elsewhere in this Voter. The League

committee that has been working to put this together has done a wonderful job. They are Anne Roussos, Lisa Harris, Anita Privett, Nan Clayton, Jaci Collins, and Nancy Neavel, as well as the group from KLRU. They all have spent long hours and many meetings which have resulted in a significant service to the public and a credit to the Austin League. It is a wonderful opportunity for our League to have the exposure on KLRU. Please plan to attend and be a part of the audience. Preparing for the November election, the Voters Guide editor is in the midst of compiling all the information needed to enable the public to compare candidates on a nonpartisan basis and make informed choices. If you would like to be a part of that team, please contact the League office and leave a message, 512-451-6710.

October will bring us more information on the workings of the State Board of Education: another informative program before the election. We look forward to our Elected Officials Reception in November, where you can meet, greet and chat with your State Representatives. I hope to see you at the Kickoff meeting on September 12. It is always so much fun to catch up with longstanding as well as brand new friends.

### Honors and Memorials

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

The following people have donated in memory of Mary Sue Neilson, who passed away in June: Barbara Werth, Joann Lovelace, Judy Parken, Jo Reichler, Frances McIntyre.

Joann Lovelace also donated in memory of Jackie Bloch, a member who was active some time ago and who passed away in June.

### The "Good Neighbor" Program

... gives the Austin League a percentage of sales from members who link the League to their Randall's "Remarkable" cards. Just go to the Customer Service desk and tell them you want to designate the League as your choice. Our account number is 465.

## Our Annual Fall Kickoff !!!

Join us for our Annual Fall Kickoff to be held this year at Congregation Beth Israel, 3901 Shoal Creek Blvd. at 2 pm. on Sunday SEPTEMBER 12. There is ample parking at this location and it is centrally located (close to MoPac). Our Speaker will be Fred Zipp, Editor of the Austin American-Statesman, who will be speaking on "New Challenges, Familiar Approaches." Leaguers, we're sure, will have some good questions for him.

For newer members - this is one of our largest non-fundraising events, and a good way to hear about what is in store for our Austin League. This is also your chance to get more involved in your League's numerous committees. Refreshments are served, and we hope you'll take advantage of this opportunity to meet members and catch-up with friends.

Feel free to bring a friend or neighbor. This is a great opportunity for non-members to hear about the actions and interests of the League. If you would like to donate refreshments such as cookies, banana bread, etc., give Judy Parken a call (502-0278) . Also let us know if you need help with directions by calling Judy or the League office at 451-6710.

One more thing: volunteers are needed to help set-up and clean-up.

### Meetings this Month

**At the Unit Meetings** this month (see calendar on page 1), we'll discuss vote integrity. To get the broadest possible perspective, you may wish to attend more than one meeting.

**The North Unit** meeting features our own Nan Clayton, who was a member of the Travis County Election Review Team. This was a large diversified committee appointed by Dana DeBeauvoir, County Clerk, to analyze Travis County's Current Voting System. Nan will discuss the results and recommendations for future voting machines.

**At the Central and South Units** we will consider the following questions: Can we trust that our votes are being recorded and counted accurately? What recourse do we have if there is a problem? Dr. Ham Richards, retired from the UT Computer Science Dept., along with Karen Renick and/or Vickie Karp of Vote Rescue of Austin, will talk about the security of our vote in Travis County using the Hart InterCivic voting machines.

### Membership

*- Judy Parken, Membership (502-0278)*

#### **Welcome, New Members**

We cordially welcome Catherine Dineen 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**

Robbie Ausley, Joan Hilgers, Jewel Hudson, Jonathon Kay, Vicki Kulberg,

Blake Locklin, Marge Loehlin, Janet and Neil Martin, Alyce Richardson, Robert Rutishauser, Gwen Santiago and Barbara Sell.

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.

<p align="center"><b>Capitol Corps and the Next Legislative Session</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Forum for Legislators: Raising Money for Judicial Races</b></p>
<p>We're gearing up for the next legislative session and currently have several vacant positions. Election Law, Juvenile Justice and Judicial Selection need Program Chairs, and we need an assistant to help with the overall advocacy effort. If you are experienced, you know how important this work is. If you're a novice at legislative work, you'll find no better opportunity to learn and contribute to your League and fellow Texans. Please contact Ann Stalnaker, Capitol Corps Coordinator, or Anita Privett, Advocacy Chair, if you want more information or to see how you can help. In preparation for the upcoming session, Karen Rankin, an experienced Issue Chair, will offer training at the Howson Library Branch on Tuesday, September 21st from 10:30 to 12:30.</p> <p>If you plan to be involved or are just curious, please consider attending this meeting. It will provide background information for the roles and responsibilities of a Capitol Corps member, and will be a great chance for us to meet one another.</p>	<p>Every election, judicial candidates face competition from opponents who are funded by special interests. Consider what happened in West Virginia: After spending \$3 million on a state Supreme Court judicial race, a large corporation received a favorable ruling by the judge it helped elect. This judge's conflict-of-interest became a U.S. Supreme Court case (Caperton v. Massey), and resulted in a huge embarrassment to that state. Only then did the WV State Legislature decide to pass a law that created a citizen-funded judicial campaign finance system.</p> <p>Instead of waiting for a problem to occur, we want Texas to pass a citizen-funded elections law in the next legislative session. We are now planning a forum for sitting legislators and their staffs that will lay out for them the reality of today's higher-court judicial races. We think they will be more amenable to fixing this problem if they first hear about problems from those who are affected.</p> <p>We need your help and experience creating this forum. Please contact Stewart at 345-7047 if you care about this issue and want to take a role in creating an alternative to "justice-for-sale."</p>
<p align="center"><b>Compass for Your Cause</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Ensuring a Smooth Election</b></p>
<p>Open a checking account with BBVA Compass Bank and they will make a \$25 contribution to the Austin League of Women Voters.</p> <p>This account gives you discounts on multiple bank products and pays the League a small percentage for internet and phone transactions.</p> <p>For information please contact Paul Sicotte, at Compass Bank, 512-421-5741.</p>	<p><b>Election Judges and Clerks Needed</b></p> <p>During each election, Travis County Elections Division hires up to 1,500 election workers. They are required to appoint one presiding judge and one alternate judge representing both the Democratic party and the Republican party for each polling location. Additional clerks also are hired to assist in operating each polling location.</p> <p>Training is provided and your time will be compensated. Early voting workers should be available to work approximately eight hours per day for 14 days (typically it will not exceed 40 hours per week). Election day workers should be available to work a minimum of twelve hours on election day. For more information, or to apply, please call 854-4996.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Register Voters</b></p>	
<p>The Austin League will be participating in several voter registration drives this fall. Please call the office periodically to find out if any are coming up soon. 451-6710</p>	

## Observer Corps: Travis County Commissioners Court

**June 22, 2010**

**Habitat for Humanity & community/  
police race relations...**

Habitat of Austin is close to obtaining 27 lots in the Gilbert Lane Subdivision in Eastern Travis County for their building projects. All that is missing is environmental impact studies to qualify for a grant through US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Commissioner Ron Davis brought together representatives of public officials in criminal justice and the NAACP to open communication and perceived inequalities in treatment of police officers involved in shootings of people of color. Representatives of the DA's office, grand jury, Sheriff Hamilton and a constable met with a rep from the NAACP in open commissioner's court to brief on the duties of public officials and the concerns of the NAACP. This was clearly a chance to air grievances and attempt to broaden the discussion. No action was taken.

- Joann Robison

**July 13th, 2010**

**Raises, downtown parking, alternative transportation...**

Item 2/7—Raises for Elected Officials. A maximum raise of 2½% was approved.

Item 6—Downtown parking for employees and visitors. Broaddus & Associates (along

with county staff) presented a study concerning the status of available parking for visitors and employees. Demand for spaces for visitors is highest on Mondays, due to jury call, and on Friday, when prisoners are most often bailed out of the county jail. There are more than 600 employees on a waiting list for a free, designated parking space; however, on many days, approximately 20% of the parking spaces are empty. Several options for optimum use of current space were discussed.

Item 21—Local Initiative Program grant. Commissioners approved a \$37,000 contribution to a Transportation Management Association. This new group is expected to include Cap Metro, CAMPO, City of Austin, and possibly TXDoT, and has several goals: 1) Encourage and assist employers and employees to find alternative modes of transportation. 2) Parking management, including parking pricing and enforcement strategies. 3) Coordinating public transportation providers and local government entities in order to maximize capacities. The ultimate goal is to keep ozone levels in compliance with EPA standards. The funds contributed by Travis County will be matched by the other entities joining the association, and augmented by two \$443,000 contributions by the state over a period of several years.

-Karen Rankin

**News Flash**

Karen Haschke was elected to be the LWV representative to the Texas Water Development Board's Region K Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group.

**Be Thinking:** In a nonpartisan blanket primary, all candidates for elected office run in the same primary regardless of political party. The top two vote getters advance to the next round, similar to a runoff election. It is entirely possible that two candidates of the same party could advance to general election. Louisiana has had this system for over 30 years, and California just passed a similar measure. What would be the pros and cons of such a system? How might it affect smaller parties and independent candidates? Call Stewart with your thoughts. 345-7047

**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