



League of Women Voters® Austin Area

Voter

Summer 2010 Volume 15 #1

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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.

Mark Your Calendar

Fall Kickoff - Sunday, Sept. 12th
Congregation Beth Israel, 3901 Shoal Creek.
Speaker: Fred Zipp, Austin American Statesman Editor

Candidate Forum
State Board of Education - districts 5 and 10.
(this will be taped for later broadcast)
Tuesday, Sept. 28th at the KLRU studios - time/place TBA

Educational Program
Sunday, October 3, 2:00 to 4:00pm "What Power does the SBOE Have?" time/place TBA

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LWV-AA Annual Meeting (May 12) Recap

- **Studies:** The Austin League will continue the Air Quality and Energy Studies.
- **Suggestions for future issues** of interest include transportation, libraries, technology, health care districts, City/Manager form of government, affordable housing and sex education in schools.
- **Bylaws:** Members approved the recommendation of bylaws committee chair Maxine Barkan, who moved that minor changes be made to be consistent with practice.

President McIntyre ranked the various aspects of this League as follows: Programs and activities: A+, budget: A-, publicity: B+, public relations: B, membership: B+, quality of volunteers: A+, number of volunteers: B, quality of board members: A+.

"I Wish the League would..." Carol Olewin wishes that we record our programs to share on YouTube, etc. for the public. Karen Haschke wishes the League could be more effective in fundraising and to order 200 more bags to sell at other conventions (\$15). Dorothy Richter wishes us to support eliminating DST. Nan Clayton wished LWV to make HS Project to make us more known to teachers and students. Lisa Harris wishes we had HS clubs. Stewart Snider wishes us to reach out to younger people with Lisa Harris' school chapter idea, a more youth-oriented web presence, Twitter and Facebook presence, UT activities, and more voter registration activities. Anne Roussos wishes we would get involved with voter registration once again-- in schools and other places-- to increase LWVAA profile.

President's Report

- Frances McIntyre



Dear members,

I want to thank you all for a great year for the Austin LWV. In the Annual Meeting Workbook (which you all received), I enumerated all the accomplishments of the 2009-2010 League year. It is amazing the breadth of

subjects and amount of information that our study groups provide to our members and the citizens of Austin.

The Annual Meeting on May 12th was a well-attended, lively and informative event. At this meeting, we decided to continue the Austin Energy and Air Quality studies, and we had many suggested new program topics for next year. Your Board of Directors will be meeting this summer to plan for the coming year. You are welcome to email me your suggestions. By the way, be sure to mark your calendar for our Fall Kickoff on September 12th.

My husband and I have just returned from a trip to London, Prague, Vienna, Budapest and Krakow. These are such interesting cities in the European Union. The most difficult part was the money conversion and the languages.

In Budapest we learned "hello" and "thank you" which we sometimes got mixed up and were met with smiles. It is a little disconcerting to pay 400 Forints for a coke. In addition to the Hungarian currency, we used Euros in Vienna, Koruna in Prague, and Zloty in Krakow. This was our first trip to those countries which have recently (1989) experienced the fall of communism. Interestingly, even with the economic downturn, all these cities looked prosperous. There were buildings being refurbished (cranes all over the place), roads and rails being upgraded, many retail stores featuring designer apparel and as far as we could tell, an excitement about their opportunity to at last govern themselves. In all the cities, we were told this was the wettest and coldest May they had ever had, so we did use our raincoats and umbrellas. We saw very old buildings, wonderful museums, castles, and lovely rivers. The boat ride on the Danube in Budapest was particularly nice as was the car travel from Prague to Vienna where we visited a picturesque city called Cesky Krumlov and where our driver was pulled over by the police for speeding. Lots of adventures...

I hope you all have a lovely summer break and I look forward to seeing you in September.

Honors and Memorials

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

In March, Joann Lovelace contributed in honor of Maxine Barkan for "her many years of life and of service to the League."

In April, Karen Haschke donated in memory of Judy Parken's late father.

This month, Frances McIntyre is donating in honor of Mary Sue Neilson and outgoing Board members Anita Privett, Susan Morrison and Sarah Tober.

Frances and Stewart Snider are also donating in memory of Mark Barkan, Maxine's late husband.

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. Just go to the customer service desk and tell them you want to designate the League as your choice. Our account number is 465.

Did You Know?

- Facts about your fellow League members

Carol Fredericks, long-time League member and a generous supporter of the League's work, was a pioneering participant in medical research as one of the first women in Central Texas to get permission to take birth control pills.

Nan Clayton, Co-chair of the League's Education Committee and Chair of the Austin Energy study, is a former president of the AISD Board of Trustees. Nan received major recognition in 2006 when the Austin school district named a new elementary

Treasurer's Notes

- Carol Olewin

“Compass for Your Cause”...

is a program being promoted by Compass Bank. The bank describes it as a mutually beneficial partnership between LWV-AA members and BBVA Compass. Members of LWV Austin who open a free account with BBVA Compass receive discounts on programs and products. The bank pays .25% of every qualifying check card purchase to the Austin League. For more information please contact Paul Sicotte, at Compass Bank, 512-421-5741.

Automatic Drafts...

can make it easier for you to make donations and membership payments to the League. 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 are 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.

Membership

- Judy Parken, Membership (502-0278)

Welcome, New Members

We cordially welcome Kathy Carvell and Tyra Duncan-Hall 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.

Harris, Clark Jobe, Betty Owen, Diane Radin, Dorothy Richter, Gail Rothe & Myron Hess, Edward Silha, Stewart Snider, Jan Soifer, Janet Reed, and Anne Wheeler.

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.

Thank You, Renewing Members

Barbara Andre, Nancy Busbey, Jaci Collins, Terry Green, Verna Grice, Lisa

Juneteenth: First in Texas!

- Marina Grant

Did you know that Texas was the first state in the Nation to celebrate Juneteenth as a legal state holiday? Juneteenth, the name given to Emancipation Day by Texans, is celebrated on June 19th to commemorate that day in 1865 when Union Major-General Gordon Granger and his soldiers sailed into Galveston to announce to slaves that they were free.

Many Americans believe that with the stroke of his pen, Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves when the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863, and in theory, it did. However, it was not until two and a half years later, on June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers announced the end of the Civil War and read aloud General Orders No. 3, that the quarter-million slaves residing in Texas learned they were free.

“The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them

becomes that between employer and hired labor...”

Since that day in 1865, African-Americans, together with fellow citizens of all races, have regarded Juneteenth as a day to commemorate the end of slavery and a first step toward inclusion in the American dream. The day is celebrated with prayer, festive foods and entertainment. Today, about half of the United States acknowledges Juneteenth in one way or another and many organizations and leaders are working to pass legislation in the U.S. Congress to make Juneteenth a National Day of observance. As a Senator, Barack Obama co-sponsored legislation to make Juneteenth a national holiday. On January 1, 1980, Texas House Bill no. 1016 declared June 19 “Emancipation Day in Texas,” making Texas the first state in the Union to legally recognize the day as a state holiday.

Juneteenth is a day with a purpose that is consistent with making democracy work for all citizens.

(Marina Grant is a new Austin League member - Ed)

Some Motions Considered at National League Convention in Atlanta

Approved:

- Motion to adopt the LWVUS Board recommended study of the Federal Role in Public Education. The study would focus on the role of the government in education policymaking, with possible consideration of funding, common standards and/or governance relationships among all levels of the government. The scope will be dependent on available resources, including committee and LWVUS staff time.
- Motion to support lifting the travel restrictions for Americans going to Cuba.
- Motion to adopt a resolution in support of safe drilling and mining for energy

resources. We also call on the Board to communicate with the President and the Congress putting them on notice that Leagues across the country are deeply concerned about this issue.

- Motion to adopt a resolution calling for improved Medicare for all.
- Motion to approve a resolution calling on the federal government to ... maximize ...the efforts of all relevant federal agencies ... to work with the ... communities most directly and immediately affected, to respond creatively, efficiently and effectively to the environmental, health and economic crisis created by the ... out-of-control BP oil well...

(continued on next page)

Observer Corps: Travis County Commissioners Court

- Karen Rankin

May 11, 2010

Item 20—Update from the Health and Human Services Department. Travis County has 525,000 individuals who are currently working, up 3.6% from this time last year. However, 15% of our population (144,000 people) are living at or below the poverty line, and 32% are living on the “poverty threshold.” The result is an “unprecedented” number of people seeking assistance at all seven family support community centers. Spending on services is up 50-65% on all three categories of assistance: 1) utilities, 2) food & prescriptions, and 3) rent & mortgage. The projected shortfall in funding will be made up by transferring the credit balance of \$153,000 from the public health budget for fiscal year 2009.

Item 23—Following a sometimes contentious 3-hour discussion, Commissioners Court voted to remove State Highway 45 Southwest from CAMPO’s transportation plan. Several residents of affected neighborhoods expressed disappointment in the change of plans, citing worsening traffic problems due to growth as well as Hays County residents who commute to Austin. Supporting the elimination of the toll road were several speakers who stated environmental concerns, including future water supply availability if/when more development occurs along the proposed road.

Commissioner Huber, whose resolution removed the toll road from the 2035 CAMPO plan, agreed with the environmental concerns and also stated that projected growth figures were incomplete, making the projected expenditure of funds to build a toll road questionable. Speakers who backed the road wanted it to stay on the plan and be studied further, if necessary, rather than removing it entirely. Judge Biscoe voted against removal of the toll road from the master plan because the county would be breaking a commitment to residents of the area. Commissioner Gomez was not in attendance, but Commissioners Huber, Eckhardt, and Davis voted in favor of the resolution.

June 8, 2010 - financial issues:

Item 4—The process of determining elected officials’ salaries for fiscal year 2011 was discussed.

Item 18—At the request of Commissioner Eckhardt, Commissioners Court voted to approve an internal county committee which will study and make recommendations on local tax policy. Representatives from several county departments are charged with proposing methods for equalizing the burden on county taxpayers. Commissioner Eckhardt noted that Texas is 43rd among the states in taxes paid per capita, with the rate being 8.4% in Texas, versus 9.7% nationally.

(LWV-US motions, continued)

- Motion to adopt a resolution calling on the Senate to change its rules to limit the use of the filibuster.
- Motion to adopt concurrence with the LWV-MD & LWV-ME, which states: ...LWVUS supports legislation to permit same-gender couples to marry under civil law...
- Motion to adopt the Emergency Resolution of Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill: ... the LWVUS demands that our government hold those responsible for the environmental disaster accountable for the clean-up.
- Motion to adopt the addition of ... transparency to the SARA Resolution...
(This is not the complete list of motions - Ed)

**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