



Summer 2012

Volume 17 # 1

LWVAA Calendar

Sat., June 9, 10 am - 1 pm. "Transition Meeting." Bring your passionate ideas for 2012-2013 programs and actions. At the home of Nancy Neavel, 2905 Scenic Drive, Austin 78703, 206-0164. Breakfast will be served. RSVP to Carol Olewin, c.olewin@gmail.com, 380-0088, so we'll have sufficient food.

Thurs., June 14. Training for facilitators and recorders for June 16 "Community Conversations about Public Education" at Nuevo Leon Restaurant. Details provided to volunteers who RSVP to Stewart Snider, s2snider@gmail.com, 345-7047.

Sat., June 16, 9:30 am - 12:00 pm. "Community Conversations about Public Education." At Huston-Tillotson University, Davage-Durden Studen t Union, 900 Chicon Street, Austin 78702. See article below for meeting details, directions, and parking. RSVP required to Stewart Snider, s2snider@gmail.com, 345-7047.

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

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Dates: Primary Runoff Election

Both the Democratic and Republican Parties will be holding Runoff Elections.

Mon., July 23, Early Voting starts for Primary Run-Off Election.

Fri., July 27, Last day of Early Voting.

Tues., July 31, Primary Runoff Election.

Help Shape LWVAA's Year 2012-2013 Transition Meeting

June 9, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, 2905 Scenic Drive

Come to this annual meeting that offers members a chance to get acquainted with new and returning board members and work on program planning for the upcoming year. Member Nancy Neavel has once again generously offered to host this meeting ([map here](#)).

To get us oriented, we'll review our program ideas from December, the likely external landscape this fall -- which includes the elections (city charter, ACC, AISD, county, state, &

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.

The *VOTER* is partially funded by the League of Women Voters of Austin Area Education Fund.

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to get on our list. You do not have to be a member. We will NOT give your email to anyone else.



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federal) -- and the Texas History Museum's exhibit on women (which we've been invited to help design). Then we will touch on the issues likely to surface at the Legislature next year, such as budget, education, women's health, campaign finance, and redistricting. After a quick review of our expected fall events (Kickoff, Legislative Reception, Community Conversations, and candidate forums), we'll spend the rest of the meeting deciding how we can be most effective in the coming year.

Please be thinking about the issues in which you are willing to expend an effort. We'll consider your priorities as we shape our fall plan. The most popular ones will become tentative actions. We'll break into groups for a short while to refine them, then reconvene and get the full group's final comments.

Come join us for coffee and breakfast tacos and participate in your League. Be sure to RSVP to Carol Olewin (c.olewin@gmail.com) so we can plan for food. We look forward to seeing you there.

~Carol Olewin, Stewart Snider, Nancy Oelklaus

Community Conversations about Public Education

Sat., June 16, 9:30 am - 12 pm

Huston-Tillotson University

Davage-Durden Student Union

June 16 marks the date for a new type of League service -- Community Conversations about Public Education. This is another way to make democracy work. The conversations will be held from 9:30 am. - noon on Saturday, June 16, in the Davage-Durden Student Union on the campus of Huston-Tillotson University. (Directions and parking information follow.)

We will gather about 100 people -- parents, educators, public officials, students, business people, neighborhood association members, students, and other community leaders for focused conversations in small groups centering on two themes:

- (1) **What does the community want for our children?**
- (2) **What is the school board's responsibility to the community, the community's responsibility to the board, and our shared responsibility to our children?**

Parents, students, AISD administrators and educators, and business and government leaders have accepted our invitation to participate, including Superintendent Maria Carstarphen. ([Click here](#) to see our 1-page flyer.)

All League members are invited to attend this event. **League volunteers are needed to facilitate and record** during the small-group conversations. Because we are assigning people to small groups to assure diversity, it is necessary to make a reservation by emailing nancy@headtoheart.com or s2snider@gmail.com. There will be **training for facilitators and recorders** on **Thursday, June 14**, at the **Nuevo Leon Restaurant**. Details will be provided to those who RSVP.

The planning committee includes League members Stewart Snider, Carol Olewin, and Nancy Oelklaus, and community volunteers Steve Swanson and Ken Zornes. The committee will compile all the notes from the recorders and find the major themes that emerge. These findings will be shared with everyone who attends, AISD administration and board members, and anyone who requests them.

Honors and Memorials

Honor: Carolyn Baker, for her decades of leadership in the League, the 2012 Annual Meeting was dedicated to her. Carolyn would enjoy visitors at her new address:
The Pavilion at Great Hills
11819 Pavilion Blvd.,
203, Austin, TX 78759
512-249-7012

In Memory:
Erica Andrews,
granddaughter of LWVAA member Betty Williamson, May 2012.

Bill Groce, former LWVAA Board Member, active in voters service, May 2012.

Thanks to members for the following donations:

Sheila Milner, in memory of Erica Andrews, granddaughter of **Betty Williamson**.

Jo Reicher, in honor of **Carolyn Baker** for her decades of service to the League.

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

Contact Us

Stewart Snider
Co-President
345-7047
Carol Olewin
Co-President

Our goal is to increase community engagement in public schools, to use the findings to draft questions for the upcoming school board forum, and to increase voter participation in school board elections. It's also possible that candidates for school board might emerge, and we might even pick up some new League members.

The Austin League helped AISD with desegregation several decades ago. We are no stranger to controversial issues, and no one has to explain the importance of quality public education to a Leaguer. I hope you will seriously consider contributing to this effort. This is an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in how the community and AISD communicate. This is the first in a series of conversations.

Directions and Parking: Held in Davage-Durden Student Union on Chicon Street between E. 7th and E. 11th Streets. From I-35, go east on 7th for about 0.6 mi. Turn left on Chalmers (just before you get to the HTU campus). Park in the lot at the corner of 8th St. and Chalmers. It's a 5-minute walk to the event. We'll have LWVAA signs pointing you to the student union.

~Nancy Oelklaus (nancy@headtoheart.com)

~Stewart Snider (s2snider@gmail.com)

~Carol Olewin (c.olewin@gmail.com)

LWVAA Expands Position on City Council Representation

If you missed the Annual Meeting last month, you may not be aware that the Single Member District (SMD) Study Committee recommended and the LWVAA members in attendance overwhelmingly approved to expand our position on the types of City Council representation we support. Here is our new written position, with changes in bold:

City Government #2 Council and Elections

- * Support for direct election of the mayor;
- * **For council member elections, support for these structures, provided that under any of these structures, there are enough equal-sized geographic districts drawn to support minority opportunity districts:**
 - a. **geographic-district representatives plus at-large representatives**
 - b. **geographic-district representatives plus super geographic-district representatives, or**
 - c. **geographic-district representatives only;**
- * Support of a campaign spending ordinance to be mandated in the City Charter.

Several days after the Annual Meeting, the LWVAA League Board voted to support a plan being promoted by Austinites for Geographic Representation (AGR), which calls for ten geographic districts as well as a Citizens Redistricting Commission to prevent political gerrymandering of the districts by elected officials. The following week the League held a press conference announcing our support for those two positions.

AGR is conducting a petition drive that will conclude by June 15, and is **looking for volunteers to validate the signatures**. With enough signatures, the City of Austin is obligated to put this on the November ballot as a Charter Referendum measure.

If you have the desire and time for some office work over the next couple of weeks, please

380-0088

Nancy Oelklaus

1st VP Program

431-4946

Judy Clack

3rd VP Organization

Voter Editor

731-0280

Jacklyn Williams

4th VP Voter Service

452-5968

Peggy Stewart

Secretary

347-0594

Carol Olewin

Treasurer

380-0088

Judy Parken

Membership

502-0278

Lenora DuBose

Voters Guide Editor

292-8201

Jaci Collins

Member Records

257-9636

Leave a Legacy to Your League

Making a legacy donation to the League of Women Voters of Austin 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:

" 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

contact Linda Curtis, ljcurtis@indytexans.org, and let her know when you are available.

Thanks!

~Stewart Snider, s2snider@gmail.com

Annual Meeting Concludes Successful League Year

Our May 16 Annual Meeting was a resounding success! Forty members gathered to sample a variety of good eats, to recognize those who had made extraordinary contributions to the League, and to help guide the League in business and program matters. President Stewart Snider miraculously started the meeting agenda early and ended it early!

Honorees

The meeting was dedicated to **Carolyn Baker**, who was an honored guest, along with her daughter Katy Larson. Carolyn retired this year from long-held positions as board vice-president of Community Relations and as chair of our popular Central Unit Meeting. She has been an active League member for decades!

Also recognized were: **Frances McIntyre**, who chaired three studies and played a key role in producing three issues of the *Voters Guide* while having a double knee replacement; **Dianne Wheeler**, who chaired the Youth Voter Registration Project in seven high schools, attending 39 separate sessions; **Judy Clack**, who has worked tirelessly to inform members as vice-president of Organization, as *Voter* editor, and e-blast sender; and **Anita Privett**, who just wrapped up a challenging stint as the LWVTX Advocacy chair, promoting LWVTX positions to the Texas Legislature.

Program

The LWVAA's new board vice-president of Program, **Nancy Oelklaus**, explained the LWVAA's new initiative to hold community conversations about education. Nancy has received a great response from invitees to the first June 16 meeting at Huston-Tillotson University. The 96 participants include parents, students, volunteers, principals, AISD leaders and policy makers, teachers, neighborhood associations, business leaders, Chamber of Commerce members, and others who care about educating students. Nancy passed around a sign-up sheet, seeking 24 League volunteers to serve as facilitators and recorders. Training is set for June 14.

Frances McIntyre continued the discussion of program. She explained how the membership decides what issues to study, research, discuss in informational meetings, and to finalize in consensus meetings. During the 2011-2012 year, the League reached consensus on two national studies--the Role of the Federal Government in Education and Privatization of Government Functions; and one state study, Should Water Be a Commodity; and one local study, City Council Representation.

During the Annual Meeting, members discussed and adopted a proposed change to the local position on the way Austin City Council members are elected, as recommended by the Single-Member District Study Committee. The old position, which dates back to 1972, supported a combination of pure-district and at-large members. The new position broadens the League's options for taking action, allowing support for "enough equal-sized geographic districts drawn to support minority opportunity districts," including geographic-district plus at-large representatives, geographic-district plus super geographic-district representatives, or geographic-district representatives only. The LWVAA board will decide which plan to support on a case-by-case basis.

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
LWVAEF.

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.

Bylaws

Members voted to approve a committee-recommended change moving the first day of the LWVAA's fiscal year, from May 1 to June 1, to end on May 31 of the following year. The change brings the bylaws into conformity with IRS requirements. Treasurer Carol Olewin noted that the change will affect the books and that she is consulting with a CPA.

Budget

Treasurer **Carol Olewin** reported on the LWVAA financials for May 2011 through April 2012. The Austin Area account saw a total income of \$16,436.17; a total expense of \$13,989.31; for a net income of \$2,446.86. The Education Fund saw a total income of \$25,920.94; a total expense of \$10,799.21; for a net income of \$15,121.73. The Education Fund was swelled by a \$10,000 gift from an anonymous donor. Carol presented the proposed 2012-2013 LWV Austin Area and Education Fund proposed budgets on behalf of Budget Chair **Shelly Baumgartner**.

Board Officers and Directors

The newly elected slate of board **officers** includes: Stewart Snider and Carol Olewin, Co-Presidents; Nancy Oelklaus, Program VP; Judy Clack, Organization VP; Jacklyn Williams, Voter Service VP; Peggy Stewart, Secretary; and Carol Olewin, Treasurer. Unfilled is the Community Relations VP position.

Newly elected board **directors** include: Judy Parken, Membership chair; Judy Clack, *Voter* editor; Lenora DuBose, *Voters Guide* editor; and Jaci Collins, Membership Records. Unfilled are the Advocacy or Observer Corps chair and the Publicity chair.

Off-board **chairs** are: Dianne Wheeler, Budget; Karen Haschke, Bylaws; Ann Stalnaker, Luv-Your-League Fundraiser; Adriana Cox and Phyllis Portnoy, Special Events co-chairs; Jan Williams, Telephone Tree; Adriana Cox, Development; and Anne Roussos, *Workbook* editor. Unfilled is the Webmaster position. Frances McIntyre will serve as the Nominating Committee chair.

Outgoing officers and directors who were recognized included: Anne Clark, Secretary; Blossom Zanger, Program; Betty Williamson, Organization Co-VP and Advocacy; and Mescal Evler, Publicity, who hopes to return to the position at the end of the year.

I Wish the League Would....

Members expressed a variety of aspirations for the LWVAA, including: investigating why kids are not getting immunizations; working to address the need for transportation for persons with low-income and mental-health problems; getting more Leaguers to work during elections and doing more to educate voters; addressing state and federal campaign finance; getting the word out about the opportunity for students who are 16 to work at the polls; making an annual tradition of conducting voter registration at Austin high schools; working to get more accurate fiscal notes attached to proposed bills in Texas Legislature; getting involved in civic projects with coalitions; conducting voter registration at naturalization ceremonies; having a party to raise money for the Education Fund; changing the rules that require two candidates be present to hold a forum and allowing the forum to be held with an empty chair; and changing the format of the State of the City dinner.

~Anne Roussos, roussos@swbell.net

Charitable Giving**IRA Charitable Distributions**

Persons aged 70½ or older can again enjoy tax savings by making charitable gifts directly from their Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) to the LWV Education Fund. Contact Lauren Frank of LWVUS at 202-263-1355 or lfrank@lww.org for additional information.

Gift to League at All Three Levels!

By making a gift of cash or securities of \$5,000 or more to the League of Women Voters Education Fund Pooled Income Fund, you can receive an immediate income tax deduction for a portion of the gift's value and continue earning a quarterly return on the interest earned for life. You can name your local League, along with the LWVEF, to benefit from the residual funds when you're gone. Contact the LWVUS Development office at 202-263-1355 or plannedgiving@lww.org.

Clarification: Robert's Rules of Order

At the May 16 Annual Meeting, my remarks did not follow Robert's Rules of Order. I believe that the progress of the business of the meeting was not hurt by the misinterpretation. The person who called the question was duly recognized by the chair, and simply should have been advised to call the "previous question." There would then be a vote to call that question, and if that passed, then a vote on the question. The correct rule follows from Chapter 13 of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief*.

Question: Must debate on a motion stop immediately as soon as any member calls the question?

Answer: It is a fairly common misconception that, after debate has continued for some time, if any member shouts out "Question!" or "I call the question!" debate must immediately cease and the chair must put the pending question to a vote. This is simply not the case. Any member who wishes to force an end to debate must first obtain the floor by being duly recognized to speak by the chair, and must then move the Previous Question. Such a motion must be seconded, and then adopted by a two-thirds vote, or by unanimous consent.

~[Patricia Bennett, pb226@austin.rr.com](mailto:Patricia.Bennett_pb226@austin.rr.com)

Become a Volunteer Deputy Registrar

Help register voters for the Presidential Election by becoming a Volunteer Deputy Registrar. Travis County enjoys the highest voter registration rate among urban counties in Texas thanks in large part to its Volunteer Deputy Registrars. The invaluable support provided by Volunteer Deputy Registrars involves assisting citizens with voter registration. They distribute voter registration applications and take responsibility for making sure that citizens complete the application correctly so there is no delay in processing. Volunteer Deputy Registrars come from all walks of life. They regularly promote voter registration at festivals, job fairs, concerts, community events, colleges and high schools, and within their own social networks

"Travis County Volunteer Deputy Registrars will play an important role in helping us achieve our goal of registering an additional 54,000 voters by September 30," said Travis County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registrar, Tina Morton. "If you are interested in serving the community by registering voters, we invite you to join our team of volunteers. Not only do we provide training each month at our office, we can also bring the training to your organization."

Each session is approximately one hour long. Monthly trainings are held at the Travis County Voter Registrar located at 5501 Airport Boulevard, Austin, TX 78751. If interested, send an email to Tax_Office@co.travis.tx.us or call 512-854-9473.

Report on Water Seminar

A panel about water in the Austin area included a commissioner of Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the general manager of the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), the director of Texas Nature Conservancy, State Representative Paul Workman, a professor from St. Edward's University, and a member of the Texas Water Development Board. The event was organized by the Austin Board of Realtors and took place at the State Capitol on April 24, 2012.

Questions were framed and posed by Kirk Watson, who kept things moving and covered a lot of bases. Goals were to educate attendees on the current concerns over water planning in Texas and to help us understand what will be needed to address the problems.

The law treats **surface water** (between banks or within reservoirs) differently from **ground water** (in the soil or underground streams and aquifers) despite the fact that the same water molecule is likely to show up in both forms at least once or twice. To help regulate ground water more effectively, Water Conservation Districts have been established in many parts of Texas. Travis County has only a small part in one of these entities, and establishing them can be costly. Participants agreed that water does not recognize political boundaries, making state involvement increasingly important.

What lessons have we learned? While there are plans in place, many communities do not take them seriously. Deciding whose priorities take precedence will be a major hurdle: agriculture vs. cities, power plants vs. recreation, and older claims vs. newer needs. Major users are agriculture (about 60%), cities, and industry.

Where do we go and how to get there? There is a need to build corridors for moving water from one area to another. Off-channel reservoirs need to be built to store more of the water we have available.

How do we pay for these plans? Is it fair to raise the price of water when it is necessary for sustaining life? Is taxation a more fair way to distribute the costs? Conservation is considered the first, cheapest way to reduce demand. Agriculture loses nearly 30% of the water through evaporation and leaks; and since it is the major user, this is the first place to look for effective conservation. One option is for farmers to switch to drip watering rather than spraying.

However, with population growth expected to continue while water is a finite resource, the need for water can be expected to grow faster than conservation efforts can accommodate. This should be a major part of the discussion for funding options, enforcement, and possible changes to water law in the upcoming legislative session and beyond. There is substantial agreement across the political aisle as to the scope of the problem. It would be encouraging if the solutions shared this agreement.

~**Joann Robison**, jrobison@austin.rr.com

News Briefs

Luv-Your-League Campaign

Luv-Your-League, our annual fundraiser for 2012, is now complete. The final amount of donations is \$7,319.00. Of that total, \$5,853.00 was given to the LWVAA Education Fund, while \$1,467 was donated to the LWVAA Fund. Although we did not meet our goal of \$10,000, we are grateful for each donation.

We want to thank everyone who contributed to this fundraising effort. Your funds will help the League to continue its mission of informing voters through our *Voters Guide* publications and by maintaining the office and providing public informational meetings.

If you would like to make a contribution to the League, it's never too late. Send your checks to the LWVAA, 1011 W. 31st Street, Austin, TX 78705. Or make a credit card contribution on-line by clicking on the "Donate" icon on our home page, lwvaustin.org. Indicate whether you want your donation to go to the tax deductible LWVAA Education Fund or the LWVAA Fund.

Thank you once again for your continued support of the League of Women Voters of the Austin Area!

~**Ann Stalnaker**, astalnaker@austin.rr.com;

~**Adriana Cox**, adrianacox@austin.rr.com

Office Volunteers STILL Needed

We need two League members who'd be willing to volunteer in the League office **one day a month for three hours** from 11 am - 2 pm, Monday through Friday. There are current openings on the **second Friday** and **third Friday** of each month.

The office is located at 1011 W. 31st St. near the corner of N. Lamar. Duties include answering the phone, opening the mail, and processing dues and donations. I will provide training and am available by phone to answer any questions that come up during your shift. This is a great way to help the League and your community.

It is very important to the community that the League maintain this public presence by keeping the office open three hours a day. If you are interested in volunteering, call or email me. I have found it's a great way to dip your toe in the water, learn a bit about the League, and serve your community.

~**Judy Clack**, 512-731-0280, jblack@yahoo.com

Travis County Commissioners Court, May 8, 2012

As part of the early planning stages for the new civil and family courthouse, Commissioners discussed committee appointments and the criteria and timelines for selecting them.

An update on the status of compliance with the state in the area of reporting court cases revealed that significant improvements have been made. From around 50% one year ago, the percentage is now above 90%, the level required to be eligible for state grants.

~**Karen Rankin**, karenrankin@austin.rr.com

Membership

New Membership Directories are available at the League office. We do not mail them out, but they are available for all members. Call first (451-6710) if you plan to stop by the office at 1011 West 31st Street near the corner with N. Lamar. The office is staffed by League volunteers from 11 am - 2 pm, Mon. - Fri. Please let me know if you have made any change in your contact info.

Welcome, New Members!

We cordially welcome new members to the Austin League: **Cathy Ellison, Mary McAllister, Julie and Jodie Moore, and Nora O'Leary-Roseberry**. We are delighted you have joined us. As a member of the Austin League, you are also a member of the national (LWVUS) and state (LWVTX) Leagues. See the links below for an abundance of educational information. Call me with your League questions anytime: 512-502-0278.

Thank You, Sustaining Members

Special thanks to this month's renewing sustaining member: Nancy Bene, Lenora DuBose, Stewart Snider, and Joyce Wilson. 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: Kathy Carvell and Louise Hasty. We depend on your support and appreciate your timely renewals.

New Membership, Renewal Dues Payment, Address Changes

Please send 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 Austin League of Women Voters. Or you may instead [click here](#) to pay your annual dues online while providing all the above information. Of your regular dues, \$52 goes to the LWVTX and the LWVUS, and only \$8 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. In either case, the League is grateful for your support!

You may renew or join, using PayPal by clicking on the amount that applies to you.

	Individual	Household	Student
Regular Dues	<u>\$60.00</u>	<u>\$90.00</u>	<u>\$20.00</u>
Sustaining	<u>\$100.00</u>	<u>\$150.00</u>	

League Websites

There is an ABUNDANCE of excellent information on the three League websites. Do check them out.

www.lwvaustin.org www.lwvtexas.org www.lwv.org

~Judy Parken, japarken@aol.com , 512-502-0278.

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