Calendar

Monday, April 3, 4:00 pm, Board Meeting League Conference Room, 1011 W. 31st Street, Austin. [map] Members Welcome.

Tuesday, April 4, VDR Training. See details in Voters Service article.

Thursday, April 6, Last Day to Register to Vote in May 6 election.

Monday, April 24, Early Voting Starts.

Monday, May 1, 4:00 pm, Board Meeting, place TBA. Members Welcome.

Saturday, May 6 General and Special Election (Local).

Saturday, May 20, 12:00 to 2:30 pm, Annual Meeting, Trinity United Methodist Church, 4001 Speedway, Austin. [map]

It's Time for Action
France McIntyre, Advocacy Director

Action, please!

Don't forget that the Texas Legislature is half over and won't meet again for two years. Our opportunities to engage are limited.

Now is the time to take action on bills that are important to the League. Go to www.lwvtexas.org and click on "League Advocacy" where you can find your representative and senator, sign up for action alerts and let your positions be heard.

Before the next Legislative session, we will have statewide elections (Primary and General in 2018). We will elect candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller, General Land Commissioner and Agriculture Commissioner (all for four-year terms). There could be a different administration for the next session. Don't forget that these offices represent you and should be responsive to you. Call or write your opinions to your elected officials about some of the outrageous bills that are before us.
Then express your ultimate power at the polls in 2018.

**Change:**
**The One Thing that Never Changes**

Cinde Weatherby, President

I've often heard that the one thing that never changes is change itself. That couldn't be more true for 2017 here at the Austin Area League. We've got big changes, medium changes, smaller changes all happening at the same time.

**Change #1 -- Home Sweet Home**

We recently alerted members and friends we lost the office space we've inhabited for the past 30 plus years. The building was sold and we had to find a new home in short order. Many thanks to the many members and supporters and others in the nonprofit community who responded to our call for help!

It is my great pleasure to announce we are taking one of those offers. **Leadership Austin (LA)**, one of Austin's nonprofit shining stars, offered to sublet an office to us in their space at 1609 Shoal Creek Blvd., Suite 202. We are extremely grateful **Executive Director Christopher Kennedy** reached out to us and see great promise in the relocation. The new space appears to more than meet our office needs, offer us more suitable meeting space, and the potential of future synergistic activities with LA. We expect to formalize the agreement following our April Board meeting, with move-in to be set the first of May.

**Change #2 -- Dealing with Growth**

Membership continues to skyrocket. We are now about 50 percent more in number than this time last year! The majority of those new members want to get involved - take action - make things happen. Our Board leaders are reaching out to engage them in LWV projects and activities.

Our Voters Service and Voter Registration leaders are quickly organizing into action groups for voter registration, voter education, student outreach, and getting out the vote. If you haven't been contacted and want to join one of those four groups, please contact 4th VP Voters Service **Jacklyn Williams** or Voter Registration Director **June Conway**.

If you are a new member, or a re-energized veteran member, and you are impatient about getting involved, reach out to us!

**Change #3 -- Annual Membership Meeting**

For new members, you should know each year there are two general membership meetings of the League. One is at the beginning of the League's program year in September at the Fall Kickoff Meeting; the other is at the end of the League's program and fiscal year in May known as the Annual Meeting.

In recent memory, the League Annual Meeting has included a weeknight potluck at a
local church. With the expanded membership numbers, we recently surveyed all members and are making some changes in response to the answers. It was clear that mid-day and Saturday are clear choices. Respondents also prefer having someone else do the meal preparation.

Thus, the 2017 Annual meeting will include lunch on Saturday, May 20th and will be catered for a per person price of $10. It will continue in the same place: Trinity United Methodist Church at 4001 Speedway, Austin. Registration and payment details will be sent out to each member soon.

The annual meeting is more than just a meal and mingling with fellow members. It is our annual business meeting when, among other things, we select officers and board members for expired terms; approve the FY 2018 budget; and handle other items of business such as needed amendments to bylaws.

LWV requirements call for agenda item information to be sent to each League member 30 days before the Annual Meeting. This comes to you in the form of the "Annual Workbook." Please look for it in your email inbox around April 20th! Just as we encourage citizens to vote in all elections, we encourage you to attend the Annual Meeting to meet new League friends and participate in wrapping up our year and preparing for the new one! Please read through the Workbook when you receive it and contact us with any questions you may have.

There are at least a few constants at the League, amidst all this change.

**Constant #1**
In the last month, the biggest "constant" in League life was the successful and fun **State of the City Dinner**. Each year the event exceeds the past in attendance and participation of our sponsors and supporters. A big thank you to each of the sponsors and donors of live and silent auction items. A very big thank you to Special Events Chair Elizabeth Cooper, former chair Eliza May, and the committee that worked so diligently in making arrangements for the rest of us to enjoy! By the way, there are a few auction items that must be picked up very soon, as we don’t want to lose them in our move! Photos will be posted on the Austin Area League site.

**Constant #2**
If there is an election, we will be involved! There are a few local May 6th elections and a **Voters Guide** is in the works. It will only be available online at lwvaustin.org. Voting related deadlines: Last Day to Register is April 6; Early Voting Begins April 24.

**Constant #3**
If you haven't yet been deputized as a volunteer deputy registrar (VDR) since January 1, 2017, please make arrangements to do it soon. You have to be retrained and get a new VDR number every two years. April 4th is your next opportunity! Sign-up and get more information here. See Voters Service information below for more details. We need you for our increased planned activities!
**Voters Service**
June Conway, Voter Registration Director

At our third meeting on March 16th, members **Penny Koo, Erin Warner, Robyn Diaz, JoAnn McKenzie** and **Zoe Trieff** climbed aboard the voter train and we are stoking up the engine. We are reaching out now to all members to attend VDR training and get or renew your Volunteer Deputy Registrar designation.

Then put a little of your time in our bank so we can call on you to help with Voters Service. We want to capture high school seniors, newcomers, cynics and foot-draggers. Not just to get registered, but be informed on the how, when, where and why of being a voter.

**VDR training** for everyone occurs on Tuesday, April 4 and every first Tuesday thereafter at 10:30 am, 12:30 pm, and 6:30 pm at the Travis County Tax Office, 5501 Airport Blvd. [map] In addition, VDR training is available third Saturdays from 10:00 to 11:30 am, April 15 and May 20 at First Unitarian Universalist Church at 4700 Grover. [map] **Sign up here** for one of these training sessions.

**Reminder:** Even if you have been a VDR in 2014-16 you must re-up again to continue as a VDR in the future.

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**State of the City Success**
Elizabeth Cooper, Special Events Chair

Thanks to all who attended the State of the City Dinner on March 7th at the DoubleTree Hotel. The evening was full of fun, laughs, and applause. Highlights include:

- an entertaining live auction with **Mary Gordon Spence**, who among other highly-prized items, auctioned off author Sarah Bird
- a call to action for educational reform from keynote speaker **Susan Dawson** of 3E Alliance, and
- the presentation of our Making Democracy Works awards, with the help of Bruce Elfant, Travis County Voter Registrar, to **Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, TechVotes**, and **ThunderCloud Subs** for their voter registration efforts.
The music was lovely, the food tasty, and our silent auction checkout was a breeze. We couldn't have done it without the hard work of our volunteers and the generous support of our sponsors. Thanks to everyone for making this a wonderful event.

### State of the City Sponsors

**Special Thanks to State of the City Dinner Sponsors**

#### Celebrating Democracy - $1,000
- Austin Firefighters Association
- Charlotte Slack

#### Honoring Democracy - $500
- John Philip Donisi
- Julia Marsden
- Texas Disposal Systems

#### Friends of the State of the City - $250
- Vikki Godwin
- Velva Price, Travis County District Clerk
- Gwen Santiago

Music sponsored by Sorrento’s Drive Thru Coffee Shop

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**Conversations with Council Members**

Lea Masiello, VP Programs

It's all About Affordability, Transportation, and Networking with Nonprofits

We have continued our meetings with Austin City Council Members, and will try to meet with all the Members through the rest of the spring.
Recently, we met with Council Members Delia Garza, Jimmy Flannigan, and Sabino Renteria. After each conversation, I have come away with a clear sense of how dedicated, energetic, smart, and committed all of our Council members are. They all deserve our support in helping to improve the quality of life in the Austin area.

We have started each meeting by asking each Council Member what they are most concerned about and to tell us about their vision for Austin and how they hope to work towards that. All of the Council Members have wanted to discuss affordable housing, transportation, and voter engagement. There are no easy paths to change in any of these areas, but we are all ready to continue working towards these goals.

Council Member Jimmy Flannigan wants very much to improve access to information about elections to people in District 6, and has begun developing a website specifically for this purpose. We are eager to get involved with sharing LWV information to this website. One of his major concerns is in pulling surrounding suburban neighborhoods into the conversation about transportation issues in Austin. To this end, it seems that we might help sponsor a forum in District 6 on this topic at some point. He is similarly concerned about school bond issues. He talked a lot about CodeNEXT and affordable housing. One of the main questions is how do we identify and expand affordable housing units, keeping in mind how developing income restricted units and market rate units impact each other and can lead to less housing available for those in the middle income brackets. CodeNEXT has to be part of the conversation about affordable housing city-wide, and Mr. Flannigan is gearing up for training sessions for discussions about this in his district in order to offer a broad style of community input.

Kate Messer is working as his full-time communications staff member, and she has lots of ideas also for some initiatives for strengthening the conversation. She is ready to work with the League, also. If you are interested in getting involved in these actions, please contact me, Lea Masiello, at leamasiello@gmail.com, and I will be sure you are in the loop as we move ahead.

Council Member Sabino "Pio" Renteria is also extremely concerned about affordable housing and has been for his entire career, as he worked relentlessly over many years to help Austin organizations develop more affordable housing, especially in his district. He sees that transportation and urban sprawl are tightly interconnected with the shortage of affordable housing, and that we must solve these problems integrally. We learned a lot about how land trusts have been instrumental in helping (and sometimes being taken advantage of) develop more affordable housing in District 8. Still, he is very positive about how land trusts can still be used to help us move forward. He feels that the key is to work with strong nonprofits who have successful models already in place, build on their strengths, and continue developing communities that meet people’s needs, including such things as community gardens, dinners, and social opportunities. He is concerned about losing local control because of state legislation and recognizes that compromising is not easy or simple here.

He has people on staff who are eager to work with us to get acquainted with his district’s communities to help develop trust when we talk about voter engagement. There are lots of opportunities for us to get involved.

Our meeting with Delia Garza, the Council Member for District 2, was also really exciting, interesting, and thought-provoking. She, too, feels that affordability is the most important issue right now, with transportation and child care tied into it. All Council Members...
Delia Garza is concerned about how the withdrawal of certain federal funding sources is going to affect local programs. She is particularly concerned about a federally support program to provide financial assistance for child care for parents who are in work training, but then the funding stops when parents really need support as they enter the job market. Council Member Garza also talked seriously about homelessness in Austin, and the work of the HOST Team approach to create outreach to homeless people and form partnerships with Cap Metro, Austin Police Department, and other nonprofits. Transportation is also crucial for helping make it possible for people to get out of their "food deserts." There are several groups helping to get healthy produce into her district's communities, such as the Sustainable Food Center and Farmers Markets. Clearly, there is a lot of work that can be done here to educate the rest of Austin and the interconnections among transportation, high quality and affordable childcare, affordable housing, the availability of healthy food, and voter engagement. I am sure that all League members can see ways we can get connected with these Council Members' work.

We have meetings the last week of March with Council Member Ann Kitchen and Mayor Pro Tem Kathy Tovo. I hope to schedule meetings with the rest of City Council Members by the end of June.

**Update from Environment Texas**

Lea Masiello, VP Programs

**How to get Connected, Involved, and Inform Others**

Luke Metzger met with League members for the second unit meeting on Friday, March 24th at Cafe Express. After Luke reviewed the work of Environment Texas and his goals for this organization, we all had some particular questions for him regarding water and air quality, the proposed storage of radioactive waste in West Texas, reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, and the possible building of a wall through Big Bend National Park.

As we talked about issues related to environmental problems locally and in Texas, one of the most resonant comments Luke made was "What happens in DC doesn't stay in DC." At the same time, Environment Texas chooses problems to work on based on these questions, "Can we win? Is it a profound issue? Do we have to money to get behind it? Does the public care? How does it fit into making sure we are addressing a diversity of issues?"

Currently, Environment Texas is working hard on many topics such as climate change, bee colony collapse, flooding and creating a green storm water infrastructure, getting kids outside more, protecting state and local parks, and many others. We did discuss the need to protect Big Bend National Park as it is in the crosshairs for the proposed wall between Texas and Mexico. There are many kinds of environmental impacts such a wall could have that are very worrisome; however, Luke believes that many politicians currently in power are not behind putting a wall up in the Big Bend area. Several League members at this meeting were very concerned about the proposal to build a storage facility for high level nuclear waster in west Texas in Andrews County. Luke noted that there are not good solutions for storing nuclear waste, and that at this time the least horrible one seems to be storing such waste locally.
rather than risk the dangers of transporting it. Not everyone agreed.

Nationally, Environment Texas is hard at work on the problems the new administration is proposing relative to climate change, including withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord and abandoning fuel efficiency standards established by the Obama administration. However, on a more positive note, Luke pointed out that the economics in support of clean energy are very strong right now, and much weaker for coal, oil, and gas. He is optimistic that more and more, companies and individuals will realize how much there is to gain economically from supporting clean energy growth.

Luke recommended a number of organizations to connect with to help us advocate for clean energy. First of all, check out EnvironmentTexas.org. Consider becoming a member and getting email action alerts. Other groups include ActTexas.org, Sierra Club, Político, and The Environmental Defense Fund. I think if you start with Environment Texas, you will find plenty of information and actions to get involved with. If you haven’t yet checked out Katherine Hayhoe’s website on climate change and her video series, Global Weirding, do so!

No programs are scheduled yet for April and May, but I am working on four programs on education! Watch for details as these plans come together in the next week or two.

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**Carrie Chapman Catt Trailblazer**

Sara Groff, Development Director

"Everybody counts in applying democracy. And there will never be a true democracy until every responsible and law-abiding adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own inalienable and unpurchasable voice in government."

Carrie Chapman Catt (1917. Votes for All: a Symposium in the Crisis 15 (1)

The US League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920. Mrs. Catt was a trailblazer long before joining the suffrage movement. After graduating from high school, she set her sights on college with the aim of being a doctor. She worked her way through college, washing dishes and teaching, as her parents would not financially support her. While attending Iowa Agriculture College, she joined the Crescent Literary Society, a student organization that allowed only men to speak at the meetings. She challenged this rule and eventually won the right for women to participate fully at meetings. She graduated in 1880 as Valedictorian and the lone woman in her class. Three years later she became one of the first women to be appointed a superintendent of schools in Iowa. Mrs. Catt was never one to concede to gender conventions of the time.

A widow at age of 26, Mrs. Catt supported herself as a journalist, working for newspapers and, eventually, the Iowa Suffrage Association, where she became the state organizer from 1890-1892. In 1892, at the request of Susan B. Anthony, Mrs. Catt addressed Congress on behalf of the suffrage movement. In 1902, she helped to start the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and spent 1908-1915 traveling the world promoting equal-suffrage rights. When she returned to the US, the suffrage movement was in turmoil. She is credited with pulling the movement back together and moving suffrage
Carrie Chapman Catt

While Mrs. Catt never had any children of her own she can be credited as one of the mothers of the suffrage movement. She never settled for the status quo and fought for equality her whole life. She understood the importance of education and formal organizations. She knew how to mobilize and energize volunteers. She fought for the dignity of women, believing that once women secured the right to vote they would be able to secure ownership of their lives. She thought empowering women in such a way would lead to a far better outcome for the world. We all carry her, and many other strong women’s legacies with us as we do the important work of the League. Many League moms continue to provide a strong foundation in civic engagement to their offspring.

In May, we will offer a way for these sons and daughters to honor their mothers this Mother’s Day.

For more information and to view sources please visit the following two links:
http://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/carrie-chapman-catt
https://cattcenter.las.iastate.edu/home/carrie-chapman-catt-1859-1947/

**Member Profile: Chrissy Nanton**

by Laurie Filipelli

"If you have something to bring to the table," says Chrissy Nanton, "the League will help you find your place." For Chrissy, one of the League of Women Voters Austin Area’s newest members, a main draw is our welcoming a range of members, all with different contributions.

As a former finance manager and researcher with two small children at home, Chrissy’s niche is helping to grow political engagement, both by working to promote online voter registration and by helping out with online League communications. The flexibility of this work allows her to balance parenting with civic involvement.

Being politically active is what it’s about for Chrissy. After moving from Las Vegas to Austin in 2016, her world shifted with the November presidential election. Asking herself, "Do I think I did enough?" Chrissy resolved to be more engaged. A longtime user of the Voters Guide, she knew she could rely on the League to educate her about the Texas candidates and the legislative process - and to present fact-based and nonpartisan views.

The League's education and healthcare priorities have always been close to Chrissy’s heart. As a researcher for a nonprofit affiliated with the University of Nevada, Chrissy focused on social services, healthcare and education. Ever since studying sociology as an undergrad, she’s understood that the barriers and challenges individuals face often have structural and institutional causes. Working with the League, she hopes to help others understand how government can work to create a greater social good. "I’m going to do..."
Chrissy has already been involved in designing the new layout for the VOTER newsletter. Thanks Chrissy!

Harper Valentine
by Laurie Filipelli

When ten-year old Harper Valentine was just four, she told her parents she wanted to sell bagels. Their immediate thought was, "Why not lemonade like other kids?" But little Harper wanted to do something different. Thus began the tradition of Harper's "bagel stand." Each February she raises money for two worthy causes by selling toasted bagels, and coffee for the grownups, from her family's garage.

One of those causes is always Austin Pets Alive. (As the cat ears she wore during our interview attest to, she is definitely an animal lover!) This year's other winner was the Austin League of Women Voters.

When I asked her, why LWV? Harper, who is an aspiring actress, said her inspiration came from a classic film: Mary Poppins. "When I watched the movie, the mother's character made me think about suffragettes. I began looking for a cause that was related to women." Of our League issues, Harper is most interested in raising awareness about women's health.

Many thanks to Harper for her generosity and effort! Even more impressive than her financial contribution is the message she gives to other kids-"it's easy to find a way to be involved!"

Giving to the League

Honors, Memorials and Donations

Randall's Good Neighbor Program gives the Austin League a percentage of sales from members who link the League to their Remarkable Cards. Complete this document and return to any Randall's store. Our account number is 465.

Making a legacy donation to the League of Women Voters Austin Area Education Fund (LWVAAEF) in your will is the easiest way to offer support of the LWVAAEF's work for years to come. Learn how to leave your legacy and become a member of our League's Legacy Society on our webpage.
Membership Report and Interest Survey
Brenda Koegler and Judy Parken, Co-Directors Membership

Welcome New Members! And a special thank you to this month’s Renewing and Sustaining members! We are grateful to Sustaining Members for their additional financial support for our local League.

Welcome, New Members:

Thank You, Sustaining Members:
Alison Dieter, Carol Whitcraft Fredericks, Sara and Ian Groff, Kent Stewart, and Zoe Trieff and Marc Bruner

Thank You, Renewing Members:
Nancy Busbey, Lisa Harris and Bruce Elfant, Joanne and Hamilton Richards, and Dianne Wheeler

As a member of the Austin League, each of you is also a member of the national and state leagues. See the links below for an abundance of educational information.

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

Member Interest Survey: If you have time to volunteer for the League (either regularly or occasionally), please complete this Member Interest Survey. This information will help us identify your skills and interests, and help us connect you to League leaders.

Need more information? Visit our webpage for more information on new memberships and membership renewals.

Regular and Sustaining Memberships: Of your $60 in regular dues, $54 goes to the LWV-TX and the LWVUS, and only $6 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.

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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.

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